

Our plan for
adult social care



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Introduction from Cllr Jean Lammiman

Cabinet member for Adult Services & Public Health



Harrow's new Adult Social Care Strategy is about building on the great work already happening across our borough - helping people live well, stay connected to their communities, and receive the right care when they need it most.

At the heart of this strategy is our commitment to the "Home First" approach. We're focusing on prevention, early support, and personalised care - so that fewer people need long-term services, and more people can enjoy healthier, more independent lives.

We've shaped this plan in response to the real challenges we face: a growing and ageing population, more complex needs, and the urgent need to tackle health inequalities and financial pressures.

- Supporting people to achieve their goals, not just receive services.
- Valuing and empowering carers with better information, advice, and recognition.
- Being honest about our resources and finding creative, community-based solutions that make a real difference.
- Making safeguarding personal - so everyone feels safe, respected, and supported.
- Working together with residents and partners to design services that reflect Harrow's strengths and values.

This strategy is our shared vision for a more inclusive, resilient, and people-first care system - one that's ready for the future and rooted in compassion.

What is Adult Social Care (ASC)?

Definition and scope

Adult Social Care (ASC) refers to the range of services and support provided to adults who, because of age, illness, disability, or other circumstances, require help to live independently, stay safe, and maintain their wellbeing. It covers both statutory and informal (family and community-based) support.

Unlike the NHS, ASC is **not universally free at the point of use**. It is largely means-tested, with people's eligibility for publicly funded care determined by an assessment of their needs and their financial situation under the **Care Act 2014**. Local authorities also have a duty to provide information, advice, and preventative services to all residents, regardless of eligibility.

Why adult social care matters

Adult social care helps individuals stay independent, healthy, and connected to their communities. It acts as a crucial bridge between health services and family resilience, filling gaps in support and reducing pressure on hospitals and emergency services.

What adult social care includes:

- **Personal care & daily living support:** Help with washing, dressing, eating, medication, and mobility.
- **Community & social support:** Access to day opportunities, transport, befriending, and activities to prevent isolation.
- **Reablement:** Short-term support after illness, injury, or hospital discharge to help people regain independence.
- **Residential & nursing care:** For those with high or complex needs who cannot remain at home.
- **Support for carers:** Practical and emotional help for unpaid carers, including respite and financial support.
- **Housing-related support:** Adaptations, equipment, supported living, and extra care housing to promote independence.
- **Safeguarding adults:** Protecting people from abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

How we have developed this strategy

Listening to people in Harrow about adult social care

We all want to live in a place we can call home, and Harrow is home to residents who are playing a vital role in shaping the future of adult social care - ensuring that services truly support people to lead fulfilling and independent lives. To do this, we're listening carefully to what people say about the help and support they get.

To create a new plan to improve adult social care in Harrow, we've looked at how things are working now, studied local data, and listened to what people have told us.

Here's how we've gathered ideas:

Listening to residents: Through co-design workshops, Local community groups have been asked to talk to people about their experiences with adult social care and what they hope for in the future. Groups have been arranged with different people across Harrow to hear a wide range of views.

Looking at local needs: We've carefully studied the current and future population in Harrow and looked at what health and care services people might need.

Talking to staff: We have spoken with adult social care staff to learn from their experiences and hear their ideas for improving services.

Local and national challenges

- **Evolving population and needs:** Harrow's population is aging, with a projected increase in residents aged 65 and over. This population shift brings a rise in complex health and social care needs, requiring adaptable and responsive services.
- **Health inequalities and economic pressures:** The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent cost-of-living challenges have highlighted health disparities and placed additional strain on vulnerable populations. This reinforces the need for targeted early support that tackles the wider social determinants of health and promotes resilience.
- **Integration and system reform:** National policy continues to advocate for greater integration between health and social care services. Harrow's active role in the sub-regional Integrated Care System (ICS) and the development of Integrated Neighbourhood Teams (INTs) offers significant opportunities for joined-up, community-centred care — aligning health, care, and prevention efforts around individuals and families. There are many changes in the NHS right now, but the need to improve the integration of local services for residents will remain an important focus.
- **Financial sustainability:** With continued financial constraints, there is a pressing need to deliver services in new and more sustainable ways. A shift towards preventative and community-based approaches is not only better for individuals but also more cost-effective in the long term — reducing crisis intervention and delayed discharges, and alleviating pressure on formal care services.

Harrow facts and figures overview

Population & diversity

- **261,200 residents** (2021 Census) – **9.3% increase** since 2011
 - **Most diverse** and **densely populated** areas in England
 - Largest ethnic groups:
 - **28.6% Asian Indian**
 - **20.5% White British**
 - **5.7% Romanian**
- 14.5% aged 65+** – growing rapidly, expected to rise **40% in 20 years**

Health & disability

- **12% of residents** are disabled (Equality Act definition)
- **21% of households** include at least one disabled person
- Key health concerns:
 - Low physical activity
 - Mental health and smoking
 - Untreated substance misuse
 - Low flu vaccination rates

Adult social care demand

2023 to 2024

- **6,533 new requests** for adult social care (2023–24)
- **2,645 residents** receiving long-term care
 - **2,111** in care for over a year
- **1,279** supported with short-term reablement
- **1,394** care reviews conducted

See Appendix: Policy, Facts and Figures for more details

What prevention in adult social care means for Harrow

What prevention means

- It's about supporting residents to **live their fullest lives for as long as possible**.
- Prevention helps people stay **independent, active, and connected** in their communities.
- It reduces health risks and delays the need for more intensive care.

Our focus in Harrow

- **Healthy ageing:** supporting people to stay well, mobile, and socially active.
- **Early intervention:** spotting risks early and providing timely support (e.g. reablement, equipment, advice).
- **Resilient communities:** working with our partners to tackle isolation and strengthen support networks.
- **Reducing inequalities:** ensuring every community has fair access to opportunities for health and wellbeing.

We want Harrow to be a place for **living well, ageing well, and staying connected** – so that residents can thrive with dignity, purpose, and independence.

Type	What this means	Examples
Prevent	Support for everyone, through universal services and community resources, to help people stay well and avoid developing care needs in the first place.	Giving advice on healthy eating, exercise, and staying connected with others to avoid loneliness
Reduce	Targeted support for people who are beginning to show signs of needing help, to slow progression and prevent further issues from developing	Helping someone who's at risk of falling by making their home safer or giving support to unpaid carers.
Delay	Specialist support for people already living with complex health conditions, to minimise the impact, help them maintain or regain skills, and reduce their ongoing care needs where possible.	Providing rehabilitation after an illness or giving regular help at home so they don't need to move into a care home.

OUR VISION:

Supporting people to live well as part of their local community, with the right care, at the right time.

What people told us was important to them



“We all want to live in the place we call home with the people and things that we love, in communities where we look out for one another, doing things that matter to us. That’s the social care future we seek”

Social Care Futures



Living well in harrow: what health and wellbeing really means for people

In Harrow, residents have shared that health and wellbeing are about more than just receiving care - they want to feel respected, emotionally supported, and connected to others. Emotional wellbeing is a major concern, with many people seeking calm, confidence, and relief from stress, especially after difficult experiences. Physical health also plays a big role in daily life, and residents want better access to NHS services, healthy food, and opportunities to stay active and mobile.

Independence and social connection are deeply valued. People want to make their own choices, live in their own homes, and stay involved in their communities. However, challenges like poor transport, inaccessible public spaces, and financial stress make it harder for many to stay connected and safe. Communication gaps also leave residents unsure about available services and how to access them, while carers often feel overwhelmed and unsupported.

Staff in adult social care agree with these concerns and emphasise the need for respectful, personalised care that reflects cultural and emotional needs. They support clearer communication, early intervention, and stronger community partnerships to prevent problems before they escalate. With better training, teamwork, and support, staff believe they can deliver more consistent care and build stronger relationships - creating a system that helps people live well, feel included, and stay in control of their lives.

OUR COMMITMENT

- **Support residents to live healthier, more fulfilling lives by improving access to physical and mental health services, promoting emotional wellbeing, and enabling active lifestyles.**
- **Focussing on early intervention, culturally sensitive care, and community-based support to reduce isolation and prevent crisis.**
- **This includes one to one ongoing support beyond crisis points; ability to build professional relationships; clear follow up and progress check-ins.**



Communication and information is clear and easy to find

It can be confusing to try and understand the adult social care system - what's available, how to access help, and what people are entitled to. This lack of clarity makes it harder for people to get the support they need when they need it. One of the most common requests was for simple, printed materials that explain services clearly, especially for those who don't use digital devices. People also suggested a central helpline where they could speak to someone who understands their situation, helping to avoid delays and confusion.

Face-to-face support was another key priority. Residents asked for welcoming, accessible drop-in sessions and community hubs, particularly for disabled people and those with communication needs. They also want consistent communication with staff, including regular updates and follow-ups, and the ability to build relationships with social workers without having to repeat their stories. Open conversations and involvement in care decisions were seen as essential throughout the care journey.

Staff also recognised this was a priority, highlighting the need for better communication between teams and clearer information sharing. Training was also seen as vital - staff need to explain things clearly, listen with empathy, and treat people with respect. When communication works well, it builds trust and helps people feel safe, supported, and valued.

OUR COMMITMENT

- **Ensure all residents can easily understand and access adult social care services by providing clear, consistent, and inclusive communication. Inclusive communication ensures that everyone feels respected, understood, and able to participate.**
- **Develop non-digital resources, a central helpline, and face-to-face support options, while improving internal communication across teams to enhance service coordination.**
- **Focussing on clear and timely communication on the things that matter ensuring respect, dignity and individuality.**

Focus area 3: relationships and connections



Stronger connections for a better life in Harrow

Relationships and community connections are vital to people's wellbeing in Harrow. Whether it's spending time with family, chatting with neighbours, or joining local groups, these interactions help people feel happier, safer, and more supported - especially during difficult times. Being part of a community gives people a sense of pride and belonging, helping them stay independent and engaged in everyday life.

However, not everyone finds it easy to stay connected. Challenges like poor transport, financial struggles, and inaccessible spaces can make it hard, especially for disabled residents and carers who are often busy supporting others. People also want consistent, trusted relationships with professionals like carers and social workers, without having to repeat their stories each time. When care is personal and reliable, it builds respect and safety.

Local community groups play a key role in filling gaps left by formal services, offering support and helping people stay active and involved. Staff in Adult Social Care agree that better teamwork, clearer communication, and stronger partnerships with community organisations could make a big difference. By improving how services work together and making community spaces more welcoming, Harrow can help more people feel included, valued, and ready to thrive.

OUR COMMITMENT

- **Strengthen social connections and trusted relationships by supporting community groups, improving transport and accessibility, and continuity in care.**
- **Enable residents to build meaningful relationships with carers, professionals and decision makers and feel part of a welcoming, inclusive community.**
- **Empowering residents into positive activities, volunteering, training and employment.**

Focus area 4: working together in partnership



Building relationships, transparency and shared goals

Adult social care works best when people and organisations team up and support each other. Different departments in the council and our partners across the health and care sector need to work more closely together. Residents shouldn't have to keep repeating their stories. Simple things like sharing updates, knowing who does what, and having clear ways to refer people to the right help can make a big difference.

Local community groups also play a big role. Residents trust these groups because they understand their needs and offer support that feels personal. People want the council to work more with these groups - not just to deliver services, but to plan them together. Volunteers can help too, by doing small tasks, offering advice, or just being there to listen. When everyone works together, support becomes stronger and more reliable.

Trust is key. Residents want to build lasting relationships with carers and professionals who know them well. When people feel heard and respected, and when services are joined up, adult social care becomes more helpful, fair, and easier to use.

OUR COMMITMENT

- **Strengthen collaboration across health, care, and community sectors to deliver joined-up support, acting on real life experiences.**
- **Build integrated neighbourhood teams and co-design services with residents and partners.**
- **Build on trust, transparency and involvement in decision-making.**



Living independently and feeling at home in Harrow

Residents and staff in Harrow agree that independence means more than living in your own home - it's about having dignity, making choices, and feeling connected. People want homes that meet their needs, with support for daily tasks and with developing life skills. They also need help navigating services, especially during big life changes like moving into independent housing or transitioning from children's to adult social care. A major concern is the lack of continuity in care, with residents often having to repeat their stories to different social workers.

Mobility and access to transport are key to staying active and connected, but many face barriers. Clear, simple information - including in non-digital formats - is essential so everyone can understand and access the support available. Emotional wellbeing and social connection are also vital, with residents asking for more opportunities to meet others and feel part of a community. Carers worry about long-term support for their loved ones, and financial security is seen as a foundation for independence.

Staff workshops highlighted the need for a strengths-based, person-centred approach. Early intervention and preventative services were seen as key to helping people stay independent and avoid crisis.

OUR COMMITMENT

- **Empower residents to live independently in homes that meet their needs, with personalised support for daily living, transitions, and long-term planning.**
- **Address barriers to mobility, financial security, and continuity of care, while promoting dignity, choice, and self-reliance.**
- **A strengths-based approach that is person centred, involving people in planning and including their family and community networks as appropriate.**

Focus area 6: making safeguarding personal



Keeping safe in Harrow

People who use adult social care services say that feeling safe includes being seen, heard and treated with respect; having someone they trust to talk to; and feeling acknowledged. This is part of what we mean when we talk about “Making Safeguarding Personal” - making sure people are involved in decisions about their own safety and care.

Feeling safe is much more than having the right care in place. Residents told us that it also means having a home that meets your needs and being able to take part in community life.

Both staff and residents said that good communication is key to staying safe. People need to know what help is available and how to get it. They asked for clear information, easy-to-use phone lines, and places they can go to talk to someone face-to-face.

Staff also need proper training so they can respond with care and understanding. When people feel heard and supported, they're more likely to feel safe and confident in their daily lives.

OUR COMMITMENT

- **Ensure safeguarding is tailored to individual needs, with a focus on dignity, respect, and empowerment.**
- **Support people to feel safe and in control, with clear pathways for protection and recovery.**

Focus area 7: supporting and valuing carers



Recognising carers as key partners in care

There are many residents in Harrow who care for family members without being paid and we know this can be an extremely challenging role. They want to be treated as experts in their loved ones' care and included in decisions. Carers also want clear communication with social workers. They need clear information about what help is available, especially when someone is moving into supported housing or starting a new care plan.

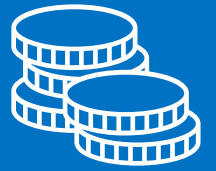
Carers often feel stressed and overwhelmed. They said they need regular breaks, someone to talk to when things get tough, and help during emergencies. Money is also a big worry - many carers need help with everyday costs and want support with applying for benefits or getting legal advice. They also asked for more help with filling out forms and understanding complicated systems.

To make things better, carers want services that are easier to use and professionals who listen and care. They want to work with the council and health teams to design better support. By giving carers the respect, help, and tools they need, Harrow can build a stronger adult social care system that helps both carers and the people they look after.

OUR COMMITMENT

- **Recognise carers as essential partners in care.**
- **Provide timely information, emotional support, financial help, and opportunities for respite to improve their wellbeing and sustainability.**
- **Include training and education to support people in their caring role.**

Focus area 8: making best use of resources



Making the most of what we have

The council spends over £100m per year on adult social care in Harrow but demand is growing and meeting needs within budget is extremely challenging. It is important that the budget is used wisely and efficiently to get the best outcomes for residents.

Residents are particularly concerned about potential cuts to health and care services and the redirection of resources, which they feel undermines trust and stability in the system.

Improving how services are delivered is also a key priority. Staff and residents alike highlighted the need to minimise delays, simplify processes, and improve communication. Better use of data and clearer information about available services would help people navigate the system more easily and reduce duplication.

Making the most of resources also means investing in the development of people working in adult social care. Staff need appropriate training, support, and stability to deliver high-quality care. Community and voluntary organisations are seen as essential partners, with an ability to meet a range of specific cultural needs for the borough's diverse population. Strengthening these partnerships, supporting volunteers, and involving residents in service design can help create a more responsive, sustainable, and compassionate care system.

OUR COMMITMENT

- **Deliver adult social care in smarter, more sustainable ways by investing in prevention, early support, and community-based solutions.**
- **Maximise impact through innovation, efficiency, and collaboration.**
- **Recognise and value people's resourcefulness and the contributions they make.**

Focus area 9: developing social care staff



Developing a strong, confident, and well-supported social care workforce

Making sure social care staff are well-trained and supported is a big priority in Harrow. New colleagues need effective introductions to their jobs, so they feel confident. Ongoing learning is also important, so staff can keep improving and stay up to date with what works best.

Looking after staff wellbeing is also very important. When staff feel supported and valued, they're more likely to stay in their jobs and give good care. Residents also said that when staff keep changing, it's hard to build trust - so retaining staff helps everyone.

Staff also want to continue to strive for better ways to work together. They asked for tools to share updates and find out who does what. Working across teams, especially when things get busy, helps avoid confusion and makes services better. Sharing ideas with other areas and learning from each other can help staff feel more confident and connected.

OUR COMMITMENT

- **Invest in the adult social care workforce through training, wellbeing support, and career development.**
- **Build a confident, compassionate, and culturally competent team that delivers high-quality care.**
- **Ensure consistency in induction and training, sharing knowledge and practice excellence.**
- **Work with commissioned providers to help them with their recruitment and workforce development.**

Thank you

A big thank you to everyone who has supported engagement including:



Harrow Association for Disabled People



Middlesex Association for the Blind



Appendix: Policy, Facts & Figures

Policy context – the case for prevention in adult social care

Prevention is a central pillar in the Government's mission-led approach to transforming health and social care. The new ten-year plan for health emphasises three key shifts: from analogue to digital, from acute to community-based care, and from treatment to prevention. Prevention is strongly aligned with the Neighbourhood Health agenda and the Darzi review of the NHS in England.

The joint Local Government Association (LGA), Association for Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS), SCIE, Mencap, Skills for Care, Think Local, Act Personal (TLAP), Care Provider Alliance and Social Care Future publication sets out a strong case for prevention in adult social care. It highlights opportunities to act earlier, offering support before needs escalate (EAAS interventions).

This includes early identification of risk, building community capacity, and providing practical support to reduce reliance on crisis services.

In Harrow, embedding prevention into our Adult Social Care Strategy is critical to:

- Supporting healthy ageing and delaying the onset of care needs
- Reducing inequalities and tackling the wider determinants of health
- Promoting independence and maintaining dignity
- Reducing system pressures and achieving financial sustainability

An effective prevention approach will maintain health, wellbeing, and social connections; enable early intervention; and support more sustainable models of care. This aligns with national integration priorities, ensuring Harrow is proactive, not reactive, in meeting resident needs.

Facts and figures: demographics & diversity

Harrow's current population

The 2021 census shows that Harrow has **261,200 residents**, which is a **9.3% increase** since 2011. Harrow is one of the most **densely populated areas in England** and has one of the most **diverse communities** in the UK. People in Harrow come from many different backgrounds, cultures, and countries.

The population includes:

28.6% with **Asian Indian** heritage

20.5% who are **White British**

5.7% with a **Romanian** background

Other large groups include **Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Afghan, Black Caribbean, Arab, Irish and Tamil** communities.

Harrow's population is also getting **older**. The average age went up from **36 to 38** between 2011 and 2021.

In 2021:

14.5% of people were **65 or older**

This is **above the London average**, but **below the national average for England**

The number of people aged 65+ has grown by **19.4%** since 2011

Over the next 20 years, this age group is expected to grow by **40%**

Ageing population and future demand on adult social care

Harrow's population is ageing, with the proportion of residents aged 65+ projected to grow by **40% over the next 20 years**. Older residents are more likely to live with one or more long-term conditions (LTCs), and as life expectancy rises, more people will require ongoing support for complex health and social care needs. This includes dementia, frailty, mobility challenges, and multiple chronic illnesses. These changes will inevitably translate into higher demand for ASC services, particularly for care at home, community-based support, adaptations, and reablement services

At a regional level, London's 65+ population is **projected to grow by 30%** by 2030, a faster rate than the **23% increase** forecast for England as a whole. For Harrow, which already has a higher-than-average proportion of older residents compared to London, this trend reinforces the urgency of shifting towards prevention, early intervention, and integrated care models to delay or reduce the need for long-term support.

The 2021 Census shows that **12% of Harrow residents** are

disabled under the Equality Act definition, and **21% of households** include at least one disabled member. People with limiting long-term conditions are more likely to experience social isolation, poorer health outcomes, and greater reliance on formal care.

To address this, the strategy will embed prevention at every stage of the care pathway. This means:

- **Proactive identification** of residents at risk of losing independence.
- **Early, targeted interventions** such as reablement, equipment provision, and housing adaptations.
- **Health promotion and lifestyle support** to reduce the risk and impact of long-term conditions.
- **Partnership working** with health, voluntary, and community sector partners to ensure coordinated support.

Facts and figures: health and social care needs

Disability and health in Harrow

According to the 2021 Census, **12% of people in Harrow have a disability** that affects their daily life. In Harrow:

Around **18,747 households (21%)** have **one person with a disability**

About **5,104 households (6%)** have **two or more people with a disability**

People whose health conditions limit their daily activities often need more support and may feel more socially isolated. This increases the need for adult social care services.

Harrow is doing **as well as or better than** the national average in many key health areas (based on data from Public Health England).

But there are some concerns:

- Not enough adults are physically active
- Many adults with mental health issues also smoke
- High number of hospital visits for mental health problems
- Lots of people using drugs like opiates or crack cocaine aren't getting treatment
- Low flu vaccine rates among people at risk and young children

Facts and figures:

Adult social care demand and performance

Adult Social Care in Harrow

In 2023–24, Harrow Council got **6,533 requests** from new people asking for adult social care support. Out of these, **1,279 people** were helped with **short-term support**, like reablement (help to get back independence).

By the end of March 2024:

- **2,645 residents** were getting **long-term care**
- **2,111 of them** had been receiving care for **over a year**
- **1,394 people** had their care reviewed, either as planned or unexpectedly

Harrow is doing well in key areas like:

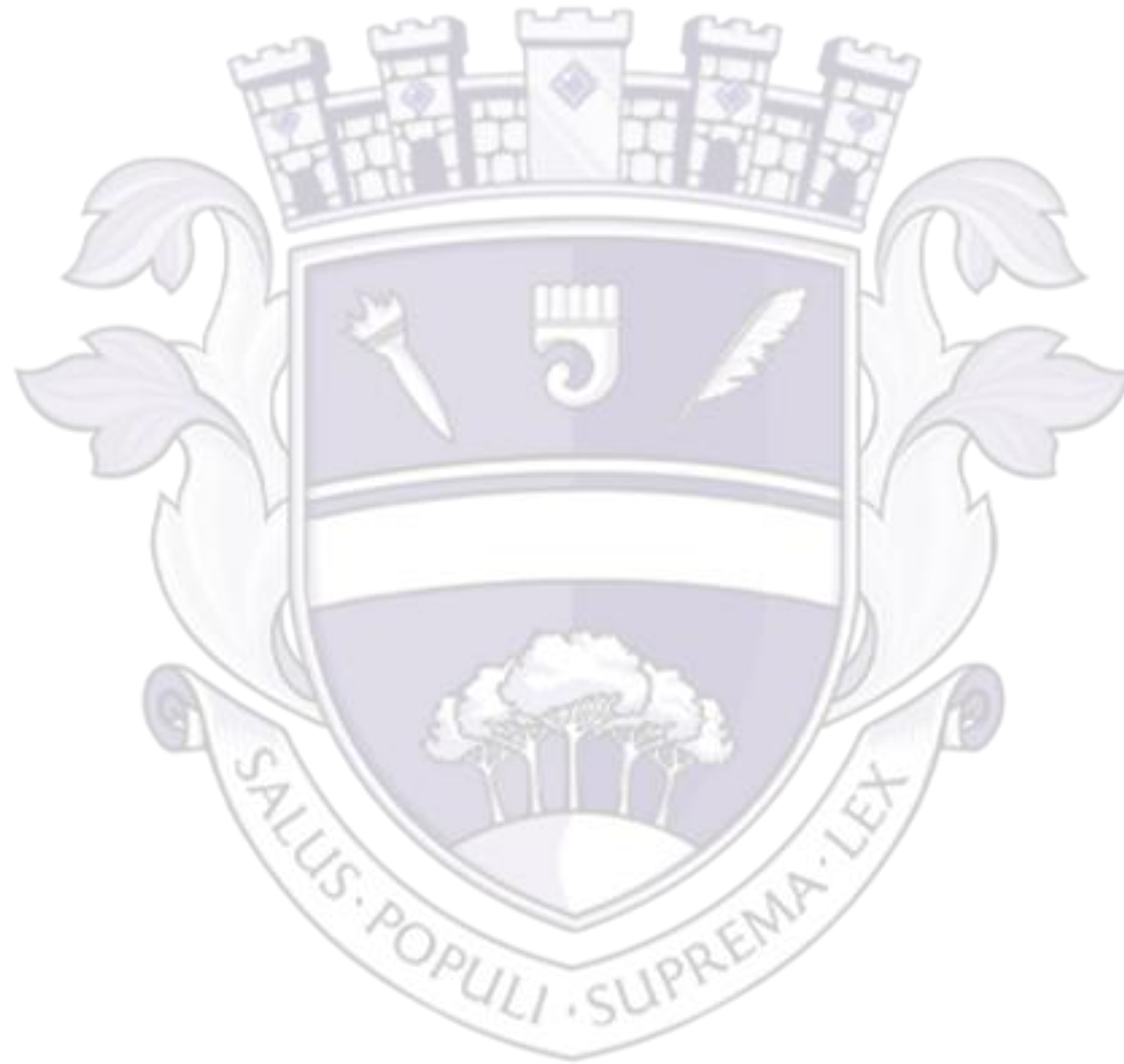
- Helping people regain independence (reablement)
- Keeping people safe (safeguarding)
- Reducing the need for care homes

In late 2024:

- 84.4% of people who got reablement support didn't need long-term care
- 95% of safeguarding cases showed less or no risk
- 97% of people said their safety goals were met
- Harrow also supports independent living:
- 82.1% of adults with mental health needs live in their own homes or with family
- 73.7% of people with learning disabilities do the same
- Fewer people are being sent to care homes, which matches Harrow's goal to focus on prevention and community support

But there are still challenges:

- More people are waiting over three months for an occupational therapy (OT) assessment, which shows pressure on therapy services
- These numbers show that adult social care in Harrow is in high demand. That's why it's important to invest in early help and community support, so fewer people need emergency or long-term care.



Adult Social Care Strategy | 2025 - 2030



LONDON BOROUGH OF
HARROW