

Council warned about social care failures

The council has been warned that if they fail to control the city's social care situation then it could cause "direct harm to people".

The Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership has failed to hit targets – blamed partly on a lack of resources and an ageing population.

Now, a risk report before the city council's [Governance, Risk and Best Value](#) (GRBV) Committee which meets this morning, has warned the authority about the consequences of not getting on top of the service. The corporate leadership team update report ranks health and social care as the council's top area of risk.

The report states : "The potential impact of failure to manage this risk effectively could include direct harm to people, safeguarding breaches, inappropriate or insufficient care packages being offered and significant reputational damage to the council with additional impact on funding of other council budgets."

Opposition councillors have hit out at the failing to get on top of the service. Liberal Democrats called for more funding from the Scottish Government to improve care.

Liberal Democrat Cllr Kevin Lang said: "This report shows the crisis we are facing in health and social care. It sets out, in the starkest of terms, the challenge the council faces, particularly given current financial pressures.

“It is vital for the agreed improvement plan to be taken forward. However, there is only one long term solution and that has to be the Scottish Government providing the funding Edinburgh needs to look after our most vulnerable citizens.”

Conservatives raised concerns about the quality of care over the winter period.

Cllr Phil Doggart said: “Despite constant promises of improvement to the service since the damaging report of May 2017, this area continues to underperform.

“As we move into the winter, there will be greater pressure placed on the delivery of health and social care. At the same time, Edinburgh must see a dramatic improvement in care services. If not the risk identified in the report of causing direct harm to people will materialise. That has been, and remains, unacceptable.”

The partnership met its October target for delayed discharge and the authority is hopeful it will meet the December 31 target of 179. Those waiting for assessment has also been reduced by 400 – as well as a slight reduction in those waiting for care packages.

Green councillor Melanie Main said: “This report is a stark reminder that, in the end, it’s all about providing decent care to our most vulnerable citizens and that is what is at risk if there are failings.

“I do see some encouraging signs that the council and NHS can get more on top of the demands on the service, but the scale of the challenge is enormous and the risks remain high.”

A spokeswoman for the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership said: “Reducing delays is a top priority for us all and we have undertaken a great deal of work to reduce the numbers of people delayed in Edinburgh hospitals awaiting packages of care.

“We work very closely with colleagues in the third and independent sector over a range of initiatives to increase the capacity for care and home services, as well as capacity within the care and nursing home sector, in order to increase the earliest opportunity for individuals to move home, or to a homely environment.

“We are never complacent about the scale and extent of the challenges, but we are making progress in reducing the numbers of delays and will continue to prioritise this challenge and report on progress to the EIJB.”

[You can read the council reports here.](#)

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