



Nexus Care

Annual Report

2019/20

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# Background to Nexxus Care

1. Nexxus Care was established in 2011 as a local authority trading company (LATC) and is 100% owned by Staffordshire County Council. The company began trading in 2018 and is registered with Company's house, company number 0748276.
2. Nexxus Care was established in 2011 as a Staffordshire County Council owned company. In 2017 the Council decided to develop it as a provider of care in the face of:
  - a) The need for additional reablement capacity to support the urgent care pathway and reduce delayed transfers of care;
  - b) The need for a contingency during the procurement of home care services in case insufficient independent providers were available to award contracts; and
  - c) The new duties to ensure a sustain the market under the Care Act 2014 and the need for a "provider of last resort".
3. Subsequently Nexxus Care was mobilised in January 2018 to provide reablement services; in December 2018 it took on a home care contract following the collapse of Allied Healthcare; and in 2019 it took on an Extra Care contract when providers withdrew from the market. Nexxus now has an annual turnover of £3.9m and 295 staff.
4. The Board meet monthly and the Chief Operating Officer provides an update on all operational areas in a set format covering key aspects of the business. All meetings are minuted and actions recorded/tracked.

# The Board

5. Nexus Care has a Board of Directors comprising of Staffordshire County Council Members and Officers, and the Chief Operating Officer, who collectively set the vision and strategy for the business and oversee operational delivery.
6. The Council's Chief Executive is responsible for the appointment of Directors. All directors present and past are registered with Company's house.
7. Nexus Care Directors at 01 April 2020 are:
  - Clair Muldowney (Chief Operating Officer)
  - Dr Richard Harling
  - Helen Riley
  - Mark Winnington
  - Mark Deaville
  - Simon Ablewhite
8. All of the above have confirmed that they comply with the responsibilities of Directors as set out by Company's House and can be found by the following link:  
<https://companieshouse.blog.gov.uk/2019/02/21/7-duties-of-a-company-director/>
9. An organisational structure for Nexus Care is included at Appendix 1.

# Vision, values and strategy

10. The Nexus Care vision is:

*To provide quality, cost effective and innovative care through a highly motivated and professional team enabling citizens to enjoy healthier, more fulfilled lives*

11. Nexus Care vision has adopted the following values:

- We are ambitious, courageous and empowering.
- We support and enable our staff to make things better.
- We are open to doing things differently.
- We are bold and willing to take difficult decisions in a commercial operating context.

12. Nexus Care's strategy is:

- The focus of operations is to intervene in the care market on behalf of the Council.
- We will be available to offer a 'provider of last resort' in the event that market is unable to provide care.
- We will grow business with the Council by agreement with commissioners.
- We will operate to same 'rules' as other providers in the independent sector.
- We will seek to offer services to self-funders within the conditions of the 'Teckal' exemption
- We will operate with Staffordshire and on the borders of the county.
- Our risk appetite is "*moderate*".

# Overview of services

## Reablement

13. The aim of reablement is to maximise people's level of independence, often after a period of illness or stay in hospital. The service works with people to set and achieve their goals. A successful outcome is to achieve these goals, prevent hospital readmission and minimise reliance on ongoing care and support, with a target of no more than 50% requiring ongoing care and support.
14. The Reablement service consists of the team as shown in the organisation chart. The local branch receives referrals directly from hospitals in East Staffordshire, Tamworth and Lichfield and complete the necessary risk assessments and care plans prior to care commencing. The service has a CQC registered manager and provide on average 750 hours of care per week.
15. The team assess within the first 72 hours whether the person is able to complete a reablement period of up to 6 weeks and continue to monitor their progress throughout. Should they have ongoing needs the service completes a Care Act assessment to determine their eligibility for Council funded care and support and those that are eligible are referred to the brokerage team to source it.

## Home care

16. In 2019/20 Nexus took on home care following the collapse of Allied Healthcare. Staff were transferred into Nexus under TUPE arrangements.
17. The home care service is a more traditional service whereby people with assessed eligible needs are provided with care and support at home. The home care service consists of two operational branches based in Cannock and Stafford. Both branches have a CQC registered manager and teams including care co-ordinators, field care supervisors and administrators. Customers include Council funded clients, NHS funded clients, and private clients.
18. The service is on the Council's standard home care contract and works to the same terms and conditions as all other contracted providers. The branches access the Council's online portal to identify and accept new clients in the same way as other contracted providers.

## Extra care

19. Nexus took over responsibility for care provision at two Extra Care schemes in November 2019 following the withdrawal of the incumbent provider. One is based in Cannock – School Court, and the other in Wombourne - Brunel Court. People live in their own flats within the schemes and receive care and support in their own homes.
  
20. Nexus works jointly with the housing provider. Each scheme has a CQC registered care manager and team leaders. Nexus maintains a presence 24/7 to meet needs during the night and other contractual requirements with the housing provider such as out of hours emergency support. Should a flat become available Nexus works in partnership to place a new resident that requires care.
  
21. Table 1 includes a list of contracted services.

**Table 1: list of contract services**

Nexus Contract Register				
Contracted Service	Start Date	End Date	Agreed Extension	Value (P/A)
Staffordshire Framework (Stafford and Cannock Dom)	1st October 2017	31st August 2021	N/A	£2.2m
Reablement Contract	13th April 2018	8th January 2022	31st March 2023	£1,051,438
Extra Care schemes	1st November 2019	1st November 2022	Await Contract (chased)	£113k
CCG/CHC (Spot purchased)	N/A	N/A	N/A	£51k
Direct Payments	N/A	N/A	N/A	£148k
Private Clients	N/A	N/A	N/A	£258k

# Annual objectives and performance

22. For 2019/20 Nexus Care set the following objectives:
- a) Provide commissioned activity
  - b) Maintain and improve quality
  - c) Balance the books
  - d) Keep the staff happy
  - e) Grow the business
  - f) Help the Council to reduce costs

## Provide commissioned activity

### Reablement

23. In 2019/20 Nexus was commissioned to provide 615 hours of reablement per week, rising to 915 hours by 01 April 2020. Nexus invoice a block amount of 660 hours. Delivery above the block hours is paid at an hourly rate as per the contract. A reconciliation is completed at the end of the year to ensure that an appropriate payment has been made in line with activity. In order to achieve 915 hours there are ongoing recruitment and retention drives.
24. 2019/20 Reablement Summary:
- 344 people started the reablement pathway.
  - Average duration of service was 25 days, against a target of <28 days
  - 55% successfully completed reablement and required no ongoing care and support, against a target of >50%
  - 15% were transferred to ongoing care and support.
  - 28% were readmitted to hospital
  - Those remaining either deceased or went on to respite services.

### Home care

25. Weekly hours vary: currently on average the Cannock branch provides 2400 hours per week and the Stafford branch 500 hours per week to a total of 307 people. This is approximately 8% of all Council commissioned home care capacity. The service has 163 care workers.

## Extra care

26. As of March 2020, the two schemes were providing around 550 hours of care weekly to a total of 45 people. There are 25 care workers across the two schemes.

## Maintain and improve quality

27. Reablement and the Stafford home care branch have a dual CQC inspection. The most recent Care Quality Commission (CQC) rated Stafford reablement and home care as 'Good'. The CQC report is available here <https://www.cqc.org.uk/location/1-4314896520>
28. Cannock home care branch has not yet been inspected by CQC since it has transferred from Allied Healthcare to Nexxus Care. The branch currently holds an overall rating of 'Good' and is rated 'Good' in all domains. As with Reablement and the Stafford home care branch, policy, processes and systems introduced recently have improved quality - for example regular internal audits, robust recruitment practices, and digital scheduling of visits. Therefore there are no concerns about Cannock branch CQC inspection.
29. Table 2 shows performance against quality indicators for Nexxus Care home care services compared to all home care providers. This shows favourable performance compared to the market as a whole.

**Table 2: performance against quality indicators**

Quality indicator	Nexxus Care home care services	All home care providers
Planned visits over 4 week period	16,000	198,596
Missed Visits	0%	4%
% of visits made within of 30 minutes of planned time	75%	81%
Duration of actual time as a % of planned time	99%	93%

30. The Extra Care schemes have not yet been inspected by CQC since they transferred to Nexxus Care. Brunel Court currently holds an overall rating of 'Good' and is rated 'Good' in all domains. School Court currently holds an overall rating of 'Good' and is rated 'Good' in all domains except for 'Well Led', which is rated as 'Requires Improvement'. As above there are no concerns about CQC inspection.
31. The results of the 2019 customer survey are included at Appendix 2. The response rate was 30% and the majority of feedback was positive. Nearly three quarters said they would recommend the service to family or friends.
32. All events are logged on to a dedicated system, monitored by the operations team for key themes and trends, and discussed with branch managers monthly. Events cannot be closed until a senior manager approves that all relevant steps have been taken and they are fully resolved. A summary of events is shared at monthly Board meetings and analysis of events in 2019/20 is included at Appendix 3. A total of 431 events were logged, including themes such as medication errors, safeguarding and accidents.

## Balance the books

33. Annual accounts for the year 2019/20 are currently being audited by an external auditor. No initial concerns have been raised, 2018/19 accounts were submitted as a 'going concern'. These are included at the private Appendix 4.

## Keep the staff happy

34. One of the biggest challenges in reablement and home care is recruitment and retention of staff. Home care is not widely deemed as a preferred career choice for a number of reasons including long and unsociable hours, travelling, and the level of responsibility against rates of pay.
35. The home care sector average for staff turnover is 40%. The Nexxus Care staff turnover during 2019/20 was 58%.
36. Nexxus Care continues to work hard to attract new staff and retain existing staff to try and increase our workforce to be able to offer care and support to more individuals. Some of the methods we have introduced during 2019/20 include:
  - Improved terms and conditions – for example block pay where possible
  - Investment into digital system to help optimise scheduling (less travelling)

- Attractive perks such as discounts at 100's of attractions, high street stores etc
- Reduced monthly cost for any car issues
- Digital technology – allowing more time caring, less paperwork
- Improved communication methods such as online platforms
- Increased engagement with leadership and management team using various platforms
- Pay evaluation method completed for back office functions in order to ensure level of pay is in line with market average
- Investment into policy management system which allows all colleagues access to all policies via an app
- Mobile phones provided to all staff
- EarlyPay – a method where care workers can access funds before they have been paid.

## Grow the business

37. Nexxus Care has seen significant growth in 2019-2020 with transfer in of services:
- Reablement – activity from Sevacare (Tamworth)
  - Home care – activity from G Professional (Cannock)
  - Home care – activity and staff from Harmony (Cannock)
  - Extra Care - activity and staff from Midland Heart at Cannock and Wombourne schemes
38. Nexxus Care continues to recruit in both reablement and home care in order to offer greater capacity and activity.

## Help SCC to reduce costs

39. 177 people (55%) completed reablement with no further need ongoing care and support, potentially averting cost of around £2m had all of these required an ongoing home care service.
40. In home care Nexxus Care follows the Trusted Assessor model which allows clients' care and support to be flexed up and down depending on their needs.

Any requirements for increases in hours and opportunities for decreases in hours are pursued as part of routine management of the service.

41. Nexus Care assists the Council to reduce non-contracted home care by taking on these clients wherever possible. This allows proper quality assurance, gives a guarantee of continuity of care, and often reduces costs.

# Annual accounts

42. Annual accounts are included at the private Appendix 4.

# Key achievements 2019/20 and ongoing issues

## Achievements

43. Nexxus Care has made some key achievements during 2019/20. These include:
- Turn round of the CQC rating for reablement and the Stafford home care branch to 'Good' from 'Requires Improvement'.
  - Increased capacity and improved performance in reablement
  - Adapting to new systems and processes within NHS
  - Implementation of a policy management system
  - Implementation of an e learning platform
  - Roll out of digital technology which has increased productivity
  - Roll out of a staff Applicant Tracking Service to improve recruitment, as well as improved staff retention
  - Successful transfer in of home care and Extra Care services

## Ongoing issues

44. **Staff recruitment and retention** remains a key challenge. Nexxus Care continues to explore innovative ways to recruit and retain, informed by feedback from staff themselves. Pay is a big factor but there are other issues that are important to staff such as how they are treated and how their individual circumstances can be accommodated by working patterns.
45. **Covid-19** presents a risk of rising costs, staff absence and potential impacts on demand. Services will need to get used to enhanced infection control measures, including the need for Personal Protective Equipment to be worn, and this may compound challenges in staff recruitment and retention.
46. **Stability in the market** will also remain a challenge for Nexxus Care. As a 'Provider of Last Resort' the company is expected to be able to respond quickly if other providers fail. To date the transfer in of services has been managed successfully.

## Developments for 2020/21

47. Nexxus Care is exploring further expansion of the business including:
- Increasing reablement activity up to commissioned levels
  - Expansion of home care into Newcastle-under-Lyme and Moorlands
  - Additional Extra Care schemes
48. Nexxus Care is exploring rebranding and marketing with the aim of becoming an employer of choice across Staffordshire, as well as further investment in systems that would enable services to reach a CQC 'Outstanding' rating.