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Local Authority Intelligence

Bexley Council

From Commissioning to Collaboration

Evidence-led analysis of the adult social care provider market,
commissioning priorities and strategic direction.

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Independent Adult Social Care Market Intelligence
& Provider Development Research

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

This publication forms part of the Odelia Local Authority Intelligence Series.

The series provides evidence-led analysis of adult social care provider markets across England, translating publicly available information into practical intelligence for providers, commissioners, housing organisations, NHS partners and sector leaders.

Each publication draws upon publicly available sources, including Market Position Statements, adult social care strategies, commissioning plans, procurement information, CQC assessments and other relevant publications.

The purpose of the series is to improve understanding of local provider markets and support informed discussion across the sector.

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THE SERIES

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IN THIS PUBLICATION

Overview and purpose	3
What the evidence tells us	4
Provider implications and commissioning priorities	5
Reflection and market insight	6
Provider action guide	7–9
Provider readiness scorecard	10
Questions, sources and disclaimer	11

PURPOSE

This note reflects publicly available information from Bexley Council’s Adult Social Care Market Position Statement, Adult Social Care Vision, market sustainability documents and related public information. Its purpose is to better understand the challenges facing Bexley’s adult social care market and consider how provider readiness can support future market development.

AT A GLANCE

Primary market theme	From Commissioning to Collaboration
Key commissioning priorities	Personalisation; Prevention; Direct Payments; Individual Service Funds; Community-Based Support; Market Sustainability; Preparing for Adulthood.
Best read for	Homecare Providers; Supported Living Providers; Community Support Providers; Complex Care Providers; Children’s Services Providers; Direct Payment / ISF Providers; Commissioners; Market Development Leads.

WHAT THE EVIDENCE TELLS US

Bexley's adult social care market is operating in a context of rising demand, financial pressure and changing expectations around how care and support should be arranged.

The council's Market Position Statement states that its role in directly purchasing care and support is reducing, while the use of personal budgets and direct payments is increasing. This means providers will need to offer greater diversity and flexibility and understand the needs of individuals as well as the wider community offer.

Bexley also promotes Individual Service Funds, where a person's budget can be given directly to a provider and the individual works with that provider to arrange care and support at home.

Financial pressure is a significant issue. Adult Social Care overspent by £3m in 2023/24 and was forecast to overspend by £2.4m in 2024/25. Children's Services pressures are also material, with a £13.6m overspend in 2023/24 and a forecast £5.4m overspend in 2024/25.

Bexley's Adult Social Care Vision focuses on enabling residents to live the life they want, with people with lived experience positioned as best placed to decide what is right for them.

Alongside increasing demand, Bexley continues to face challenges including:

- Adult Social Care and Children's Services financial pressure
- Increasing complexity of need
- Workforce recruitment and retention pressures
- Need for greater provider flexibility
- Growth in personalised care models
- Need to strengthen prevention and early intervention
- Direct payment and ISF market readiness
- Preparing for Adulthood and SEND-related pressures
- Market sustainability across homecare and care home

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR PROVIDERS

Bexley's direction suggests that future provider success will depend on more than being listed, known or compliant.

Commissioners, residents and families are likely to value providers who can evidence:

- Person-centred support
- Flexible service design
- Clear outcomes
- Strong governance
- Community connections
- Direct payment and ISF readiness
- Ability to support independence
- Co-production with people and families
- Partnership working with health, voluntary sector and council teams
- Support for transitions into adulthood where relevant

Provider visibility is important in Bexley, but visibility has two audiences.

Providers need to be visible to commissioners, but also understandable to people arranging support through personal budgets, direct payments or Individual Service Funds.

WHAT COMMISSIONERS MAY BE THINKING

Current commissioning priorities appear to extend beyond sourcing traditional care packages.

The focus is increasingly on developing a provider market that:

- Supports independence
- Reduces long-term demand
- Works with residents, families and unpaid carers
- Offers flexible support
- Connects people to community assets
- Supports personal budgets, direct payments and ISFs
- Helps manage financial pressure
- Contributes to prevention and early intervention

This suggests a shift from purchasing care towards shaping a more personalised and collaborative provider market.

REFLECTION

Bexley's published information highlights an important lesson for providers.

In a personalised care market, success is unlikely to depend only on delivering good care or holding a council contract. It will increasingly depend on whether providers can explain their offer clearly, evidence outcomes and work flexibly with individuals, families, commissioners and community partners.

Understanding this shift will help providers position themselves more effectively within Bexley's evolving adult social care market.

EMERGING MARKET THEME

Across Bexley's published strategies and market documents, a recurring theme is the growing importance of provider collaboration rather than simply provider capacity. As personal budgets, direct payments and Individual Service Funds become more significant, commissioners increasingly need providers who can work flexibly with residents, families, community partners and statutory services, enabling more personalised support and a more sustainable local care market.

KEY MARKET INSIGHT

Bexley's challenge is not simply increasing provider numbers. It is developing a collaborative provider market that can support personalisation, prevention and independence.

COMMISSIONER'S LENS

Bexley's challenge is not simply securing enough providers. It is building a provider market that can respond flexibly to individual choice, support prevention, work with community assets and contribute to long-term financial sustainability. Providers that can evidence partnership working, clear outcomes, direct payment readiness and person-centred delivery are likely to align most closely with these priorities.

PROVIDER ACTION GUIDE

Based on Bexley's Current Priorities

Homecare

COUNCIL CHALLENGES

- Supporting more people to remain at home.
- Managing rising demand and cost.
- Workforce recruitment and retention pressures.
- Supporting independence through personalised care.
- Responding to people using direct payments and ISFs.

PROVIDERS SHOULD CONSIDER

- Demonstrating clear homecare outcomes, not just hours delivered.
- Showing continuity of care and workforce stability.
- Making services easy for residents and families to understand.
- Building direct payment and ISF-friendly service information.
- Evidencing how support promotes independence and reduces escalation

Supported Living

COUNCIL CHALLENGES

- Supporting independence and choice.
- Meeting increasingly complex needs.
- Strengthening community-based support.
- Supporting people to live the life they choose.
- Managing cost and sustainability.

PROVIDERS SHOULD CONSIDER

- Demonstrating independence outcomes.
- Recording tenancy sustainment and community participation.
- Evidencing person-centred planning and co-production.
- Building links with housing and community partners.
- Showing how support reduces reliance on higher-cost services.

PROVIDER ACTION GUIDE

Based on Bexley's Current Priorities

Complex Care

COUNCIL CHALLENGES

- Increasing complexity of need.
- Pressure on statutory services.
- Need for coordinated health and care support.
- Managing safeguarding and risk well.
- Supporting people closer to home where possible.

PROVIDERS SHOULD CONSIDER

- Developing specialist workforce training.
- Evidencing multidisciplinary working.
- Producing anonymised case studies for complex care delivery.
- Demonstrating robust safeguarding and risk governance.
- Measuring outcomes around stability, safety and independence.

Prevention & Community Support

COUNCIL CHALLENGES

- Reducing long-term demand.
- Supporting earlier intervention.
- Making better use of community assets.
- Helping people stay independent.
- Supporting residents outside formal care routes where appropriate.

PROVIDERS SHOULD CONSIDER

- Developing low-level preventative support.
- Building partnerships with voluntary and community organisations.
- Measuring wellbeing, confidence and social inclusion outcomes.
- Demonstrating how support delays or prevents escalation.
- Making services accessible to self-funders and direct payment users.

PROVIDER ACTION GUIDE

Based on Bexley's Current Priorities

Direct Payments & Individual Service Funds

COUNCIL CHALLENGES

- Increasing use of personal budgets and direct payments.
- Giving residents more choice and control.
- Ensuring people can find suitable support.
- Supporting providers to adapt to personalised purchasing.
- Balancing flexibility with quality and safeguarding.

PROVIDERS SHOULD CONSIDER

- Creating clear service information for individuals and families.
- Explaining pricing, outcomes and support options simply.
- Building systems to manage ISF arrangements transparently.
- Supporting people to shape their own care and support.
- Evidencing how personalised support delivers better outcomes.

Children's Services & Preparing for Adulthood

COUNCIL CHALLENGES

- Significant Children's Services financial pressure.
- SEND and Preparing for Adulthood priorities.
- Supporting young people moving into adult life.
- Reducing high-cost escalation where possible.
- Improving transition pathways between children's and adult services.

PROVIDERS SHOULD CONSIDER

- Developing transition-focused support offers.
- Evidencing outcomes around independence, life skills and stability.
- Building expertise in SEND, autism and complex needs.
- Working collaboratively with families, schools, health and social care.
- Showing how early support can reduce longer-term statutory pressure.

PROVIDER READINESS SCORECARD

How prepared is your organisation for Bexley's future commissioning priorities?

Question	Yes	No
Can we clearly explain our offer to both commissioners and residents?	☐	☐
Can we evidence outcomes that support independence and wellbeing?	☐	☐
Are our services suitable for direct payment or ISF arrangements?	☐	☐
Do we have clear pricing and service information for families and individuals?	☐	☐
Can we demonstrate partnership working with community and voluntary organisations?	☐	☐
Do we evidence co-production with people who use our services?	☐	☐
Can we support people with increasingly complex needs safely?	☐	☐
Do we have strong safeguarding, governance and quality assurance processes?	☐	☐
Can we show how our services reduce escalation or support prevention?	☐	☐
Are we able to support transitions into adulthood where relevant?	☐	☐

READINESS REFLECTION

Bexley's commissioning direction suggests that providers will increasingly need to demonstrate flexibility, clarity and partnership, not only compliance. In a market where personal budgets, direct payments and ISFs are becoming more important, providers must be able to communicate their value to individuals and families as well as commissioners.

This scorecard is intended as a practical self-assessment tool to help providers reflect on commissioning readiness and identify areas for development.

QUESTIONS WORTH EXPLORING

- How can providers make their offer clearer to people using direct payments or ISFs?
- What information do commissioners and residents need to understand provider capability?
- How can market development strengthen personalised care without weakening quality assurance?
- How can children's and adult services work better together around Preparing for Adulthood?

SOURCES

- Bexley Adult Social Care Market Position Statement 2023 to 2028
- Bexley Adult Social Care Vision
- Bexley Market Sustainability Plan
- Bexley Direct Payments and Individual Service Funds information
- Bexley LGA Adult Social Care Peer Challenge
- Bexley financial and budget documents
- Skills for Care Bexley workforce summary
- Bexley SEND and Preparing for Adulthood Strategy 2024 to 2028

DISCLAIMER

This insight note is based on publicly available information and reflects the author's interpretation of published evidence. It is intended to support discussion and should not be regarded as representing the views of Bexley Council or any other organisation.

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