

Nottingham City Council

Adult Social Care Strategy

Enabling Gloriously Ordinary Lives (2026–2028)

Foreword

A Shared Civic Commitment

Adult social care matters to everyone people who draw on care and support, carers, residents, the workforce, families, and communities.

Nottingham is a city of creativity, resilience, and strong neighbourhoods. It is also a city shaped by inequality, poverty, housing pressure, and health disparities. Adult social care is not a marginal service responding only at the edges of life; it is part of the everyday fabric of the city.

For too long, adult social care has been described through a single story: crisis.

A system portrayed as broken, collapsing, or permanently failing.

While pressures are real, this narrative has consequences. Repeated crisis framing leads to disengagement, fatalism, and a belief that nothing meaningful can change. When residents hear only that a system is “broken,” they are less likely to support reform or imagine shared solutions.

This strategy makes a deliberate choice to tell a different story.

Not a story that denies pressure but one that explains what adult social care is for, why it matters, and how Nottingham is choosing to act.

It is grounded in a simple human truth:

We all want to live in a place we call home, with the people and things we love, doing what matters to us.

That is the promise of Gloriously Ordinary Lives and the shared purpose of adult social care in Nottingham.

What Adult Social Care Is For

Adult social care in Nottingham exists to support people who draw on care and support, carers and workforce, residents, communities to live well with dignity, safety, independence, connection, and purpose.

It also exists to:

- support carers to sustain caring relationships without harm to their own wellbeing
- enable residents and communities to look out for one another and prevent isolation
- act as a steward of public resources, balancing care, safety, and sustainability

Adult social care is not only about services, eligibility, or responding to crisis.

It is about:

- supporting everyday life

- sustaining relationships and belonging
- preventing avoidable harm and loss of independence
- enabling participation in family, community, and civic life

Adult social care works best when it starts with life, not services, and when it is shaped around what matters to people, carers, and residents.

Our Strategic Direction

Where Nottingham Is Going and Why

This strategy is a choice.

Nottingham City Council is deliberately choosing to move adult social care away from a system that waits for crisis, manages demand through late intervention, and controls cost by reducing support, and towards a system that enables people to live well earlier, longer, and with greater control while stewarding public resources responsibly.

Where We Are Going

Between 2026 and 2028, Nottingham will build an adult social care system that is:

- **Life-led, not service-led**
Starting with what matters to people who draw on care and support and their carers, workforce, residents, communities.

- **Closer to Home and neighbourhood-based**
Organising support around where life happens, strengthening community connection.
- **Preventative by default**
Acting earlier to reduce escalation, distress, and avoidable dependency.
- **Co-produced as standard**
Sharing power with people who draw on care and support, carers, residents, and the workforce.
- **Equity-driven**
Targeting effort and investment where inequality most affects people's lives.
- **Relational, safe, and humane**
Valuing relationships, safeguarding, continuity, and stewardship.
- **Financially responsible and sustainable**
Using public money well to improve lives and reduce long-term pressure.

Why This Direction

We are choosing this direction because:

- people's needs do not begin in crisis, but systems often respond as if they do
- late intervention costs more and delivers poorer outcomes

- people who draw on care and support and carers consistently tell us they want control, connection, and to stay at home
- residents expect public money to be used transparently and wisely
- treating everyone the same in an unequal city produces unfair outcomes
- personalisation without stewardship creates risk, not freedom
- technology and data can support independence when used well
- a burnt-out workforce cannot deliver humane, safe care

This strategy is about changing the conditions, not simply improving performance within the same model.

Our Shared Vision

Gloriously Ordinary Lives

A gloriously ordinary life is not extraordinary in policy terms.

It is extraordinary in human terms.

It means:

- living in your own home (or a place that truly feels like home)
- staying connected to people, community, and purpose

- shaping your own life, with support when needed not control imposed

This vision stands for a deliberate shift away from managing people through systems, and towards enabling people, carers, and workforce, communities to live well safely and on their own terms.

Our Guiding Principles

How We Decide Under Pressure

These five principles guide every major decision, especially when resources are constrained or trade-offs are required.

1. Putting People First

Decisions start with people who draw on care and support, alongside their carers not services or processes.

2. Improving All the Time

We learn from lived experience, practice, data, and review and change accordingly.

3. Measuring What Matters

Success is defined by better lives, not just activity or cost.

4. Ensuring Safety, Accountability, and Stewardship

Choice is supported, safeguarding is shared, and the Council does not withdraw from responsibility.

5. Financial Stewardship

Public money is used to enable independence, prevent harm, and avoid short-term savings that shift risk elsewhere.

Making It Real in Nottingham

What Good Feels Like

This strategy adopts the *Making it Real* “I” and “We” statements developed by Think Local Act Personal (TLAP) as the lived-experience compass.

People who draw on care and support should be able to say:

- *I am listened to and respected*
- *I have control over my life*
- *I live in a place I call home*
- *I am supported to stay safe without losing independence*

Carers, communities, and residents should be able to say:

- *We work together*
- *We act early*
- *We share responsibility*
- *We learn and improve together*

These statements guide practice, commissioning, safeguarding, performance, and investment.

A Relational Practice Model

“I Am Because We Are”

This strategy is grounded in a shared ethic:

I am because we are.

Good practice is relational.

No one carries care, risk, or responsibility alone.

Practice:

- starts with relationship
- is done *with*, not *to*
- recognises interdependence
- balances choice and safety through stewardship

The workforce is trusted to use professional judgement, supported by:

- clear escalation routes
- reflective supervision
- leadership oversight
- learning, not blame

When the workforce is supported, people are safer and live better lives.

Workforce Matters

This strategy is for the workforce, not just about them.

It matters because:

- workforce experience shapes people's experience
- relational practice requires time, trust, and clarity
- safety depends on shared accountability

The workforce including Personal Assistants are:

- co-producers of quality
- guardians of safety
- stewards of public trust

Technology-Enabled Lives

Technology will be used to:

- support independence and safety at home
- strengthen connection
- support carers and the workforce
- reduce unnecessary escalation

Technology will support relationships, not replace them.

Data With Soul

Nottingham will use data with soul combining:

- performance data (flow, pressure, sustainability)
- lived-experience data (control, dignity, safety)

Data will inform prevention, investment, safeguarding, and learning not just dashboards.

Safeguarding, Safety, and Learning

Safety is not in tension with personalisation.
It is what makes meaningful choice possible.

Nottingham:

- maintains clear safeguarding pathways
- supports informed choice and risk
- learns from Serious Incidents and Safeguarding Adult Review (SARs)
- evidences stewardship, not abdication

**A Serious Incident / Safeguarding Adult Review
Defensibility Annex** supports this strategy.

Conclusion

A System That Enables Life Together

This strategy sets a clear direction for Nottingham.

By aligning people-first practice, carers, residents, workforce, prevention, equity, safety, financial stewardship, technology, and *Making it Real*, Nottingham is building an adult social care system that is:

- humane
- safe

- financially responsible
- and rooted in community

Enabling people who draw on care and support with carers, families, residents, and the workforce to live gloriously ordinary lives, together.