The Adult Social Care Culture Health Check

Is your service's culture supporting your staff and residents, or working against them?

As a care manager, you are juggling compliance, rotas, and daily operations. Because culture is invisible, it is easy to assume everything is fine until something goes wrong, like a sudden drop in staff retention or a challenging inspection.

This quick audit is designed to help you look under the bonnet of your service. It focuses on the three pillars of a genuine culture of care: Psychological Safety, Active Person-Centredness, and Mental Health Competence.

Part 1: The Self-Assessment

Rate your service honestly against the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5.(1 = Never, 3 = Sometimes, 5 = Consistently)

Pillar 1: Psychological Safety & Wellbeing

A healthy culture starts with how safe your staff feel to be human.

Statement	Score
Staff feel comfortable admitting mistakes or asking for help without fear of blame or shame.	
Mental health and stress are discussed openly in 1-to-1s and supervisions, not just during crises.	
Handovers focus on both resident wellbeing and how the incoming/outgoing team are doing.	

Pillar 1 Subtotal: /15

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Pillar 2: Active Person-Centredness

Person-centred care cannot be delivered by staff who feel treated like numbers.

Statement	Score
Care plans genuinely reflect a resident's personal history, choices, and identity; not just their clinical needs.	
Staff have the autonomy to adapt routines to suit a resident's mood or preference on the day.	
The service actively celebrates when staff show unique empathy or go the extra mile for dignity.	

Pillar 2 Subtotal: /15

Pillar 3: Mental Health Competence

Teams need the confidence and skills to handle complex emotional and mental health needs.

Statement	Score
Staff feel confident identifying early signs of distress, anxiety, or cognitive decline in residents.	
The team understands the difference between a clinical symptom and an unmet emotional need.	
Staff have formal, accredited training to manage the mental health complexities of adult social care.	

Pillar 3 Subtotal: /15

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Part 2: Total Score & What It Means

Add your three subtotals together to get your overall score out of 45.

36 – 45: The Thriving Culture

Your culture is a shield. Your team feels safe, residents receive deeply individualised care, and you are actively building robust evidence for CQC's "Well-led" and "Caring" key questions. Your main challenge is maintaining this standard during busy periods and ensuring new starters are fully onboarded into these values.

21 – 35: The Reactive Culture

You have solid foundations, but strain is showing. Your team cares deeply, but operational pressures or a lack of advanced skills mean that care can sometimes become "task-led" rather than person-centred. You likely suffer from occasional staff burnout or find it hard to evidence consistent best-practice to regulators.

9 – 20: The Fragile Culture

Action is needed urgently. Your service may be trapped in a cycle of fire-fighting—dealing with high staff turnover, communication breakdowns, or escalating resident behaviors. Staff may feel unsupported or unequipped, which directly impacts the quality of life for your residents.

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Part 3: Next Steps for the Manager

Look back at the statements where you scored 1, 2, or 3. These are your immediate opportunities for growth.

3 Quick Wins to Start Today:

- **The "Check-In" Handover:** Spend the first 2 minutes of your next team handover asking how the team is feeling, rather than just diving straight into the tasks.
- **Review One Care Plan:** Audit a single care plan today. If you remove the medical diagnoses, can you still see the person inside it? If not, challenge the team to update it.
- **Bridge the Skills Gap:** A culture of care requires competence. If your team scored low on Pillar 3, it is usually because they lack the specific tools to manage complex mental health confidently.

Need to build a stronger culture?

Our fully funded Mental Health Training Pathways are designed specifically to help adult social care teams move from reactive task management to proactive, person-centred care.

100% of the costs are reimbursable through the Learning and Development Support Scheme (LDSS).