

Health and Adult Social Care and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 14th January 2021

Report Title: Adult Social Care COVID-19 Update

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Laura Jeuda - Adult Social Care and Health

Senior Officer: Mark Palethorpe - Executive Director of People

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. At the time of writing the rate of new infection across Cheshire East has remained stable for the past few weeks with Cheshire and Merseyside and the North West showing an overall fall in the rate of new cases. Lockdown restrictions remain in place nationally.
- 1.2. This update summarises the current situation in relation to COVID-19 in care homes, care at home, and complex care in Cheshire East. It also summarises measures which have already been put in place and actions which will be taken to minimise risk of COVID-19 transmission in Adult Social Care settings.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The committee is asked to:
 - 2.1.1. Note the actions undertaken.
 - 2.1.2. Review and scrutinise plans to continue to support care provision in Cheshire East due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1. To ensure that the Council has robust contract management, and quality assurance process in place to minimise risk of COVID-19 transmission in Adult Social Care settings.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. The Council has a statutory duty to manage the Care Market, to ensure that our residents are safeguarded, and also has contractual responsibilities directly with a number of carer providers across Cheshire East. Therefore it is not an option to do nothing.

5. Update on Settings

5.1. Accommodation with Care

5.1.1. Current situation

- At the time of writing: 9 care homes are currently experiencing a COVID-19 outbreak, an outbreak is defined as 2 or more linked cases amongst staff and residents.
- Of these, 4 homes have completed the 14-day isolation period

5.2. Care at Home

5.2.1. Current situation

- At the time of writing suspected and confirmed COVID-19 cases amongst staff and service users have remained relatively low. Currently there are 23 confirmed cases among service users and 38 amongst staff.
- Care at Home providers are generally operating effectively. One or two providers have experienced issues over staffing levels particularly due to unplanned school closures, however, the Contract Management team has worked closely with these providers to resolve these issues as they arise.

5.3. Complex Care

5.3.1. Current situation

- At the time of writing, within complex care settings we are aware of 1 confirmed case amongst service users and 3 confirmed cases amongst staff. We also have 12 staff members self-isolating due to contact with a Covid positive relative.

6. Background

6.1. Accommodation with Care

6.1.1. Measures currently in place

- The Whole Home Testing Programme in which staff are tested weekly, and residents are tested every 4 weeks, continues and is generally working well. The programme has helped to identify asymptomatic staff members at an early stage so that they are able to self-isolate and prevent

the spread of the virus to residents and other staff members. Due to the current demand on the Laboratory service a small proportion of homes have reported a delay in test result being returned. Local monitoring remains in place via the Infection Control Team on this matter.

- Officers are continuing to work closely with Care Homes to support the roll out of the national rapid testing programme, better known as Lateral Flow Testing (LFT). LFT kits in Care Homes are subject to national deployment and to date there have been a large proportion of homes across Cheshire East who have received their test kits. In preparation for and upon receipt of delivery, officers will continue to engage with Care Homes to understand the local position relating to test kits and the appropriate technology being issued.
- A webinar has been delivered for Care Homes focusing on the implementation and logistical planning that homes will have to undertake to ensure that LFT is completed in a safe way. Care Homes have shared that the request to undertake testing will present financial implications, staffing challenges and additional cost pressure to homes due to the time and planning required to safely facilitate testing prior to any visit taking place. Officers will continue to monitor the implementation of the test kits and work as pragmatically as possible with Care Homes going forward.
- Cheshire East is expected to receive the second tranche of funding from Round 2 of the Infection Control fund in the New Year. This will support care providers to limit staff movement, support safe visiting among other workforce resilience and infection control measures.
- All care homes have an Infection Prevention Control Outbreak Plan supported by an Outbreak Management Toolkit issued by the Council. These can be quickly stepped up in the event of an outbreak and appropriate support put in place from the Infection Prevention and Control service and the Council's Quality Assurance team.
- Officers are also working with care providers to ensure that their staff and care home residents can access flu vaccinations to ensure that there is resilience in the care workforce.
- Monthly care home webinars have been set up in partnership with Cheshire CCG for care home providers with themed agendas such as winter planning, infection control, digital services etc. The next webinar is taking place in January 2021 and has a focus on hospital discharge.

- Weekly mutual aid calls continue for Accommodation with Care providers. These calls provide an opportunity for care home managers to share good practice and offer mutual support.
- 74 Care Homes have been allocated a free iPad via NHSE. The benefits iPad continue to enable residents to stay in touch with their loved ones and facilitate GP consultations. Local visiting guidance has been produced to support care homes to facilitate safe visiting of relatives. A number of Care Homes across the Borough are continuing to put in place bespoke arrangements to facilitate visits for family member, such as external visiting pods, internal allocated visiting rooms with the appropriate PPE and risk management plans. Public Health and the Quality Assurance team are working closely with Care Homes to ensure they are doing all they can to support safe visiting arrangements in care homes for family members and relatives.
- The Care Home COVID-19 flu vaccination delivery plan has been completed, verified and submitted to Cheshire CCG.
- Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) visits continue to be made by IPC nurses to care homes that have experienced more serious outbreaks. These calls provide vital support and advice to homes and are well received.
- The newly appointed Cheshire East Council Infection Control Nurse will be working with Care Homes in the coming months to undertake an analysis of Infection Prevention Control Practices across Care Homes. The focus will be to audit and analyse current Infection Prevention Control systems and process place and offer technical advice and support
- Market position/sustainability reviews continue to be undertaken on a monthly basis by way of a multi-disciplinary preparedness call on a fortnightly basis.
- The Quality Assurance Team continue to undertake weekly contact calls to all care homes across the Borough. The purpose of this contact call is to seek assurance of the effective ongoing safe service delivery and address any emerging risk.
- Analysis of COVID-19 outbreak data has been undertaken to identify trends or patterns in the types of homes in which outbreaks occur. This information will be used to target additional support to prevent future outbreaks.

- A two-tiered approach has been introduced for Quality Assurance; care homes will be sent a list of trigger questions, and a desktop review will be used to determine which homes are at higher risk of quality issues and therefore require a face-to-face Quality Assurance visit, and which homes can continue to be monitored virtually.
- Care homes continue to be asked how they are communicating with friends and family of their residents, and whether any support is needed to improve this, to help ensure that friends and family adhere to visiting guidance. Recommendations from this are being taken forward in partnership with the Councils Public Health Team.
- The Quality Assurance team will be working closely with Skills for Care to support the roll out of the newly launched Deputy Managers network across Cheshire East which is a virtual network specifically for deputy Care Home managers. The focus of the network is to build supportive connections and share best practice and aims to enhance support and development along with delivering themed sessions on Wellbeing & Resilience, Self Confidence, Personal Effectiveness and Delegation with Confidence.

6.1.2. Actions to be taken

- The Council continues to work with CCG colleagues to identify designated settings which are capable of supporting Covid 19 hospital patients who are medically fit for discharge but require support to enable them to fully recover. This is proving difficult as these settings must be able to isolate patients from any other residents to prevent any risk of onward transmission of the virus and meet the required Care Quality Commission, Infection Prevention Control Regulations.
- Ongoing work has been taking place locally with CCG colleagues in relation to seasonal flu vaccination for both Care Homes residents and staff along with the wider provider market. Officers will work with home and care provider managers to identify a Flu Champion in their organisations who will highlight the immunisation programme and encourage colleagues to get their flu jab. The Flu Champion will work alongside their local GP practice to arrange vaccination through district nurse or community pharmacy support.
- Commissioners are working closely with colleagues in Health to ensure that the vaccine is rolled out to care home staff and residents who are a priority cohort. Leighton Hospital received stocks of the vaccine shortly

after Christmas and it is expected that stocks will arrive at Macclesfield Hospital shortly after the New Year. Care home providers have been asked to supply details of their staff to mid Cheshire Hospital Trust so that an appointment can be booked for them to have their vaccination at Leighton Hospital.

- Administering the Pfizer vaccine to care home residents is more problematic due to the storage conditions required. However, it is understood that some Primary Care Networks have contacted care home providers and offered to vaccinate their residents and staff in the New Year.
- Commissioners are working with Health colleagues across Cheshire to develop an hospital discharge pathway for patients who are being discharged to a care home. The pathway, which reflects latest national guidance, is designed to provide guidance and assurance for care home providers. It will be promoted to Regional Managers and policy makers in the care market via a clinically led webinar in January.
- A multi-agency Communications Task and Finish group has been established to co-ordinate and enhance joint communications between Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester Councils, Cheshire CCG and other Health colleagues. This will support and supplement local ongoing communication methods such as monthly webinars, Mutual Aid calls and Provider briefings.

6.2. Care at Home

6.2.1. Actions taken to support Providers

- The CLIPPER system continues to help providers source PPE and there continues to be positive feedback on the system. CEC continue to support providers with PPE where providers are approaching critical need.
- Professor Rod Thomson from our Public Health Team attended a mutual aid call as a guest speaker and answered providers' questions about COVID-19. The main questions asked related to PPE and testing. Providers gave very positive feedback on this session.
- Infection Prevention and Control training has been rolled out to all domiciliary care providers. Training was delivered over MS Teams by a nurse from Cheshire CCG, and attendees demonstrated donning and doffing (taking on and off) of PPE to check they were doing it correctly. Thirty-six Cheshire East providers were trained in total, and those who attended gave positive feedback.

- £672k has been distributed to community care providers with a registered office in Cheshire East from the second round of the Government's Infection Control Fund for specified Infection Control and workforce resilience measures.

6.3. Complex Care

6.3.1. Actions taken to support providers

- Cheshire East Council is part of a pilot scheme to roll out COVID-19 testing for Supported Living settings and Extra Care Housing schemes, similar to the Whole Care Home Testing Programme.
- The 'outbreaks preparedness toolkit' for care homes has been rolled out to Complex Care settings. It will contain information and advice on what steps these settings can take to reduce the risk of outbreaks of COVID-19 and seasonal infectious illnesses and minimise the impact if outbreaks do occur.
- Providers are being supported with PPE, as described above for Accommodation with Care and Care at Home.
- Complex and Extra Care Housing care providers with registered offices in Cheshire East have now received a share of the Government's Infection Control Fund.

7. Implications of the Recommendations

7.1. Legal Implications

- Local Authorities have a duty under the Care Act 2014 to ensure we meet our statutory obligations.
- The Council effectively manages contracts to ensure that value for money is provided, and that the person continues to receive quality of care in accordance with the Provider's contractual obligations.
- The Council has a statutory Safeguarding role which it must fulfil diligently and in accordance with statutory requirements.

7.2. Finance Implications

- The sector has reported they are facing challenges due primarily low occupancy and increased costs relating to PPE. Close monitoring of business viability remains in place.

7.3. Policy Implications

- This proposal is in keeping with the requirements of the Care Act 2014 and does not have any specific policy implications

7.4. Equality Implications

- The focus has been on ensuring that service users and carers continue to be able to access information, advice, and be able to continue visiting family members placed within Care Homes and Complex Care settings. Care providers have made extensive use of new technologies to ensure communication between family members and relatives.

7.5. Human Resources Implications

- There are no known direct Human Resource implications for the Council arising from this report at this time. Depending on the staffing requirements of the designated settings there may be a need to redeploy Care4CE staff to support these schemes.

7.6. Risk Management Implications

- The continuing Covid-19 pandemic and with the risk of a second wave or spike in COVID19 combined with winter pressures could place significant pressures on the Social Care market. Detailed planning is taking place with CCG colleagues and with social care providers to plan for the coming months and mitigate risks.

7.7. Rural Communities Implications

- There are no direct Rural Communities implications arising from this report.

7.8. Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children

- There are no implication arising from this report to note in relation to Children & Young People.

7.9. Public Health Implications

- COVID19 has had profound impacts on many people who use services and their carers. It will be important to understand and support Adult Social Care service users and carers with any long-term impacts in terms of both Mental and Physical Health and Wellbeing.

7.10. Climate Change Implications

The Council is currently reviewing policy developments for Social Value in response to Covid-19 recovery planning. This includes local Social, Economic and Environmental impacts

8. Ward Members Affected

8.1. All wards are affected

9. Consultation & Engagement

- Ongoing engagement continues a regular basis with providers across the Borough. The main methods of communication are via the provider mutual aid calls, themed Webinars and weekly contact calls via the Quality Assurance team. In addition to this engagement direct support is provided from the local Infection Prevention Control service and CCG teams.

10. Access to Information

N/A

11. Contact Information

11.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

Name: Nichola Thompson

Job Title: Director of Commissioning

Email: Nichola.thompson@cheshireeast.gov.uk