

Health and Adults Social Care and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 8th October 2020

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. Cases of COVID-19 have begun to increase again in Cheshire East and more widely across the North West. 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. To review and scrutinise the actions undertaken and plans in place 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.

3.2. Accommodation with Care

3.2.1. Current situation

- 5 care homes are currently experiencing a COVID-19 outbreak, according to the Infection Prevention and Control team definition of 2 or more related cases amongst staff and residents.

- In particular, there has been an increase in confirmed COVID-19 cases amongst staff. A majority of these cases are asymptomatic.

3.3. Care at Home

3.3.1. Current situation

- Suspected and confirmed COVID-19 cases amongst staff and service users have remained relatively unchanged over the last 8 weeks, and all figures have remained low. Currently the figures for suspected residents, confirmed residents, suspected staff, and confirmed staff are all less than 10.

3.4. Complex Care

3.4.1. Current situation

- There continues to be no reported suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 amongst residents or staff of Complex 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 was not an option to do nothing.

5. Background

5.1. Accommodation with Care

5.1.1. Measures currently in place

- The Whole Home Testing Programme in which staff are tested weekly, and residents are tested every 4 weeks, has been integrated into Business as Usual for providers. Cheshire East Council has completed a piece of work checking whether the Whole Home Testing Programme timetable, received via Department of Health and Social Care, is reflective of what is happening on the ground. Generally, it appears that the programme is working well, although time taken to receive results can vary.
- The antibody testing programme for Accommodation with Care staff has now gone live, and there has been a large uptake. The turnaround time is delayed slightly due to the unprecedented demand.
- Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) recovery visits have been undertaken by IPC nurses at 16 care homes which have experienced more serious outbreaks. These have been well received and will continue.

- An 'outbreaks preparedness toolkit' has been circulated to all care homes. It contains information and advice on what steps care homes can take to reduce the risk of outbreaks of COVID-19 and seasonal infectious illnesses and minimise the impact if outbreaks do occur.
- Information has been collected from CEC care homes located close to the Greater Manchester (GM) border, particularly in relation to the number of staff who live in GM and what processes the care homes have in place because of this. One home close to the border, where 70% of the workforce come from the GM area, has had a reoccurrence of COVID-19 positive cases, initially in staff. CEC have escalated this to the Regional Testing Group and have sent a list of CEC homes close to the border to the Group and requested priority testing for those homes if required.
- CEC have developed guidance on visitors to care homes, based on national and regional guidance, and this has been circulated to providers.
- Guidance on co-horting, zoning & isolation has been issued.
- Emotional support programme for care home staff implemented.
- The CLIPPER system has been introduced to help providers source PPE. CEC continue to support providers with PPE where necessary.
- Providers were contacted on 11/8/20, reminding them of current local and national guidance they can draw on, and cautioning them to remain vigilant to the possibility of further COVID-19 outbreaks.
- There is continuous monitoring of the financial viability of care homes.
- Market position/ sustainability review undertaken on a monthly basis.

5.1.2. Actions to be taken

- Analysis of COVID-19 outbreaks data has been undertaken to identify trends in the types of homes in which outbreaks occurred, to determine which homes may be most at risk of having an outbreak. This information will be circulated to CEC officers and partners and will be used to target support.
- Work is being undertaken to understand the areas of Greater Manchester which are experiencing high levels of COVID-19 cases, and what age group these cases are in. This information will be used to understand the risks to care homes near the border with Greater Manchester and put support in place for them.

- A two-tiered approach is being taken to 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' dynamic risk assessments of whether to facilitate friends and family visiting, and what the visiting arrangements should be, will be sampled and quality assured.
- Care homes will 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.
- NHS Cheshire CCG is hosting a winter preparedness webinar on 15th October for care homes, which will include information about the 2020/21 flu vaccination programme.

5.2. Care at Home

5.2.1. Actions taken to support Providers

- The CLIPPER system has been introduced to help providers source PPE, and feedback on this from providers is more positive than when it was initially introduced. CEC continue to support providers with PPE where necessary.
- In collaboration with NHS Cheshire CCG, CEC have offered Infection Prevention and Control training to all domiciliary care providers over a 6-week period. Training was delivered over Microsoft Teams by a nurse from NHS Cheshire CCG, and attendees demonstrated donning and doffing (taking on and off) of Personal Protective Equipment to check they were doing it correctly. 36 Cheshire East providers were trained in total, and those who attended gave positive feedback that the session was useful, and they learned something new.
- CEC officers have a good relationship with Care at Home providers and are confident they would reach out if they were having any issues.

5.3. Complex Care

5.3.1. Actions taken to support providers

- Cohort COVID-19 testing for Supported Living settings, similar to the Whole Care Home Testing Programme, is being arranged by Department of Health & Social Care (DHSC). CEC have put together a

list of eligible Supported Living settings and will share this with DHSC this week. Once the data has been processed by DHSC, the Supported Living settings will be able to order their test kits for residents and staff.

- The 'outbreaks preparedness toolkit' for care homes is currently being adapted for use by 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.

6. Implications of the Recommendations

6.1. 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.

6.2. 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.

6.3. Policy Implications

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

6.4. 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.

6.5. Human Resources Implications

- There are no direct Human Resource implications for the Council arising from this report.

6.6. 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.

6.7. Rural Communities Implications

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

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

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

6.9. 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.

7.1. 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:

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