

## **Health and Adults Social Care and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

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**Date of Meeting:** 3<sup>rd</sup> December 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

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### **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: 18 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, 7 homes have completed the 14-day isolation period, and 7 homes currently have no confirmed cases among residents.

### **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 13 confirmed cases among service users and 19 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 2 confirmed cases amongst staff. We also have one staff member 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.

- Planning is underway with the Council's Public Health Team to explore the possibility of a Lateral Flow Testing pilot to support Care Homes. Lateral Flow Tests allow a quick turnaround of results (within 20-30 minutes) and if implemented correctly and with the normal precautions around PPE and social distancing, may support safe visiting within care homes.
- Cheshire East received the first tranche of funding from Round 2 of the Infection Control fund on 2nd October 2020 equating to £2.356 million. Of this £1.567 million has been passported directly to care homes to support with the Infection Control measures specified in Government guidance. These measures are designed to limit staff movement within the home, 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 on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and has a focus on Infection Prevention Control, Flu Outbreak common themes and trends, Visiting advice, and Counselling and Bereavement Support for Care Home staff.
- 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.
- A Multi-Disciplinary Team has been established to design a relatives visiting strategy for Care Homes across Cheshire East that complements the existing Department of Health and Social Care guidance. The purpose of the strategy is to offer guidance and support to homes around facilitating creative visiting options for family members in a safe way. The strategy will offer comprehensive guidance, advice and support to Care Homes that can be used to support their Dynamic Risk Assessment processes. Once the strategy is finalised it will be agreed by Cheshire East Councils Director of Public Health and monitored locally via Infection Prevention Control and the Councils Quality Assurance Team.
- The Care Home COVID-19 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.
- 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.

#### **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.
- Officers will continue to monitor the implementation of the antibody testing from the Department of Health and Social Care across selected care homes in the Borough.
- 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.

### **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.

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#### **8.1. 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

### **9. Ward Members Affected**

9.1. All wards are affected

### **10. 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.

### **11. Access to Information**

N/A

### **12. Contact Information**

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

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