

SOCIAL AND HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday 16 th July, 2020
Report Subject	Support provided to Flintshire Care Homes during the COVID-19 Pandemic
Portfolio Holder	Cabinet Member for Social Services
Report Author	Chief Officer Social Services
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the pandemic, the County Council has provided essential support to the care home sector Flintshire. Members will be aware of the national pressures on funding and recruitment which been experienced in our County. Some of these issues have been exacerbated by the arrival of COVID -19. This report is to assure the Committee that Flintshire Care Homes have and will continue to be properly supported by the Council.

The care home sector is not extensive in number in Flintshire, and the national pressures on funding and recruitment have of course been experienced in our County. There are 27 Care Homes in Flintshire, local providers in the main, small family run businesses with strong links to the community, and the impact of COVID-19 on the long term sustainability of their businesses needs to be considered.

To respond to both the short term pressures on providers and the longer term sustainability issues, the Council has provided an unprecedented level of support and response to Care Homes; which has been recognised by our partners. This report outlines the measures put in place to support Care Home partners who are in turn, supporting among the most vulnerable in our County.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the Committee endorses the approach of the Council in supporting the local Care Home sector.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE SUPPORT PROVIDED TO CARE HOMES IN FLINTSHIRE
1.01	Since the outbreak of the virus, Social Services have been responsive and proactive in the support offered to Care Homes. This report outlines the measures put in place to support those who are in turn, supporting the most vulnerable in our County.
1.02	Monitoring changes in legislation and guidance Flintshire County Council are working to the most up to date guidance from Welsh Government, Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) and Public Health Wales (PHW).
1.03	Contact and support The Contracts & Commissioning Team are in daily contact with independent sector care homes and complete BCUHB's SharePoint questionnaire. This covers areas such as residents and staff testing positive in the past 24hrs, PPE needs, and any emerging issues arising for the home. The results of these enquiries are shared in daily meetings with commissioners, Environmental Health Officers and colleagues from BCUHB, in partners we work to support and resolve any issues arising from the calls. Homes, where positive COVID-19 cases have been confirmed, are deemed 'Red Homes' and they are subject to the PHW guidance which requires a 28 day period free from any new admissions to the home. These homes are assigned an Environmental Health Officer to advise on infection control, use of PPE, isolation and social distancing. An escalation process is in place to support the monitoring of the impact the pandemic is having in individual providers, especially in cases where the 28 day period free from admissions as this is having a financial impact of business viability. We are taking supporting actions in relation to this. Weekly Provider teleconference meetings are held virtually where issues can be shared and discussed with joint solutions co-designed. Representatives from BCUHB Commissioning and the CHC Team, alongside a GP cluster lead attend the calls to enable understanding of the local situation and to provide advice. Care providers have welcomed this support and the meetings are well attended.

	<p>Social Services have an “on call” arrangement every weekend and provide support advice and guidance 7 days per week.</p> <p>We have established a robust central point for distribution for all new information and guidance, this is shared with Providers and others as soon as it is published.</p> <p>Each Home has been allocated a Contract Monitoring Officer who provides regular support, advice and guidance on all matters individual to the home, they also provide a caring / listening ear and have throughout the challenging time.</p>
1.04	<p>Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)</p> <p>Weekly deliveries of PPE to each care home are arranged through North East Wales Community Equipment Stores (NEWCES) and delivered by volunteers. There is no charge for the equipment or the delivery.</p> <p>Additional PPE can be arranged if surplus supplies are available in other homes. The Council arranges safe transfer of the supplies to the location where the PPE is required.</p> <p>The Council have also bulk purchased additional masks and gloves, which are available to homes. The provision of PPE by our North East Wales Community Equipment Service has been exceptionally well managed, and 2 inspections from Army Colleagues (received by every such service in Wales) have confirmed it to be leading practice.</p>
1.05	<p>Testing</p> <p>There have been many changes to the National guidance on testing and Flintshire Social Services along with the care home providers have been robust in their application. Previously all residents and staff in care homes with confirmed case of coronavirus were tested.</p> <p>From 16th May care homes who have not reported an outbreak or any cases of coronavirus have been able to use an online portal to order testing kits for their residents and staff. Test kits are provided for the whole care home, this includes all residents and staff.</p> <p>From Monday 15th June all care home staff have been offered a weekly test for a four week period. Local Health Boards are managing testing arrangements for care homes locally.</p> <p>Tests are coming through reasonably quickly and there are escalation process in place should testing or the result be delayed.</p>
1.06	<p>Hospital Discharge</p> <p>On 7 April Welsh Government issued the COVID-19 Hospital Discharge Service Requirements (Wales). The guidance sets out the Hospital Discharge Services Requirements for health, social care, third and independent sector partners in Wales, this lays out the actions that must be taken immediately to enhance discharge arrangements and the</p>

	<p>provision of community support.</p> <p>An update was issued to include the new approach to testing on discharge for people normally resident in care homes or potentially being discharged to a care home on Discharge to Recover then Assess Pathway.</p> <p>Everyone in hospital must have a COVID 19 test with the result available before they can leave hospital, no one with a Red result can be discharged back to or in a care home.</p> <p>The Council has had robust arrangements in place to ensure that the Welsh Government guidance is adhered to and worked proactively with the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board so that patients are not discharged to care homes without a test indicating that they do not have COVID 19.</p>
1.07	<p>Financial Support</p> <p>To address some of the immediate financial pressures on social care as a consequence of COVID-19, Welsh Government Ministers have announced an initial £40 million is being made available to local authorities to help meet the additional costs adult care providers are experiencing at this time.</p> <p>The principle of this Hardship Fund is to enable local authorities to help meet the reasonable increased operational costs adult social care providers are incurring as a result of COVID-19 only i.e. those costs in excess of their usual costs of delivering commissioned care and support. This funding has been used to support a 10% payment to care homes covering the period 16th March to 31st May. This payment equates to 10% of the fees incurred for 11 weeks at the normal rate for all Council funded residents and the Council's proportion of those who are joint funded by the Health Board. This has recently been extended to the 30th June.</p> <p>Emergency payments have been made to some independent sector homes where the pandemic is having an impact on business sustainability. Additional work is being undertaken to map the voids in care homes between 16th March 2020 and the 30th June 2020 created by COVID-19 and to support the provider accordingly.</p>
1.08	<p>Volunteers</p> <p>A volunteer programme is being overseen by Social Services. The volunteers have supported with the following vital activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1:1 Telephone Support • Shopping • Children's Shoebox Appeal coordination. • Delivery of PPE to Care Providers • iPad deliveries to the in-house providers • Hanging basket deliveries from Tri Ffordd to In-house care homes. • Llys Jasmine - Helping with delivering meals, chatting to residents and taking them out into the garden area. • Supporting Shopping collection and delivery - Options Group Pen-y-

	<p>Bryn</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transporting an employee to her temporary shift at an Independent Care Home. • Care home - Garden Maintenance and upkeep of building
1.09	<p>Staffing</p> <p>Social Services as part of its deployment of staff from other teams have assigned those with appropriate skills to assist with supporting the whole sector. This has happened in a variety of ways for example we have had staff from the training team working shifts in a residential care home.</p>
1.10	<p>Donations made to the Council</p> <p>Hand sanitisers, handmade scrubs, visors of all descriptions have been donated by local businesses, and have been distributed to care home providers across Flintshire.</p>
1.11	<p>Virtual IT Training</p> <p>The Social Services Workforce Development Team have made virtual training available to ensure staff are able to keep up to date with mandatory training.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ COVID19: Dealing with loss & grief ○ COVID19: impact on mental health ○ Diabetes, Pressure Ulcer & Tissue Viability assisted eating & drinking ○ Epilepsy & Rescue Meds ○ Infection Control, Food Safety, End of Life care ○ Level II Accredited Food Safety ○ Medication ○ Medication, Food Safety, Infection Control ○ Medication, Infection Control, Safeguarding ○ Mental Wellbeing during covid19 ○ Mini core topics (for FLVC volunteers only) ○ Online Moving and Handling Portal (resource available to access for 6 months) ○ Personal Care, Medication, Epilepsy ○ Record keeping, End of Life, Dementia ○ Resilience in the Workplace ○ Safeguarding, Dementia, GDPR ○ Supervision ○ Working with difficult to engage clients
1.12	<p>Care First</p> <p>The Council's Health and Wellbeing staff portal 'Care First' has been made available to staff in all independent sector social care providers. The Council are covering the costs of any additional usage.</p>
1.13	<p>Recruitment</p> <p>We continue to share local vacancies through the Care@Fintshire Facebook page</p> <p>The North Wales Regional Collaborative have created a page on their</p>

	<p>regional website where they can add links to assist with any vacancies there may be in providers in the region. https://www.northwalescollaborative.wales/blog/</p> <p>Also, the national We Care Wales Campaign are able to share any links on their website on behalf of providers. https://www.wecare.wales/jobs/</p> <p>We have shared this information with providers through our regular communications.</p>
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The Pandemic has seen a rapid shift from day to day operation to the complexity of responding to unprecedented challenges on all services. Where grant conditions allow, claims to the Welsh Government hardship fund will assist with some of these costs, and so the financial impact for the Council will be mitigated by the funding made available by Welsh Government.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	As described in 1.03, local Providers have been involved in conversations throughout, and we have been in constant contact with colleagues at CIW, BCUHB and PHW

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	This work forms part of the Social Services COVID-19 response

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Contact Officer: Susie Lunt, Senior Manager: Integrated Services, Lead Adults</p> <p>Telephone: 01352 701407 E-mail: susie.lunt@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="352 257 1318 360">1) Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) – CIW register, inspect and take action to improve the quality and safety of services for the well-being of the people of Wales<li data-bbox="352 405 1342 508">2) Public Health Wales (PHW) – PHW are the national public health agency in Wales and work to protect and improve health and well-being and reduce health inequalities for the people of Wales.<li data-bbox="352 553 1358 799">3) Discharge to Recover then Assess – Where people who are medically fit and do not require an acute hospital bed, but may still Require care services are provided with short term, funded support to be discharged to their own home (where appropriate) or another community setting. Assessment for longer-term care and support needs is then undertaken in the most appropriate setting and at the right time for the person.