

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT

**Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Adult Social Care and Health)
5th January 2021**

Councillor	Portfolio	Period of Report
Paul Cummins	Adult Social Care	December 2020

1. Care Homes and Commissioning

We continue to receive positive feedback about the weekly engagement sessions with Sefton Care Providers, and our improved relationship will continue to influence the ongoing development of a robust integrated Care Home Strategy and ongoing fee setting process.

There is significant ongoing discussion nationally, regionally and locally on the roll out of Lateral Flow Testing in care homes to support visiting, national guidance was released on the 1st December, and the local response to this is still being formulated at this time. This is a difficult area to navigate with our care homes and ongoing support and guidance is being given to homes, as well as the development of a position that looks to support locally where we can, but also balances the care homes' ability to manage this process effectively and safely. The care homes were issued guidance on the 27th November reflecting North West Public Health England guidance to homes, which reflected that the guidance requires care homes to develop a visiting policy which will facilitate a limited amount of visiting for care home residents, wherever it is possible to do so in a risk managed way. Care home visiting policies should clearly set out how staff, residents and visitors will be informed of any changes to visiting at the care home. The letter set out criteria to be met before the risk assessed consideration of visit is made. This includes:

- No active COVID-19 outbreak in the care home
- No more than a single suspected / confirmed case in staff or residents (subject to infection prevention and control risk assessment)
- No staffing shortage, outstanding safeguarding concerns or any other concerns which would compromise the care home's ability to conduct safe visiting.
- No concern in relation to residents' welfare - this includes completing, reviewing and updating: -
 - a risk assessment for visiting assessments of individual resident needs and circumstances to include and ethical implications, ensuring that the residents are treated with respect so that their human rights, personal choices, safety and dignity are upheld;
 - no outstanding care home infection prevention and control concerns or issues.

- All safeguards, infection prevention and control and visiting policies are in place, including clear criteria for suspending visits immediately, for example if more than one staff/resident are suspected of having COVID-19.

We are working with care homes to develop a best practice example policy and to provide further training as required.

Vaccination Update

The Care Home Cell has commenced supporting care homes with a staff and resident vaccination programme. There are logistical issues to overcome, such as ensuring care home staff can access Vaccination Hubs which are being established. This is a very positive development, although subject to more detailed planning.

2. Safeguarding through Covid

Ensuring that we safeguard Sefton people through the pandemic has meant that we have had to develop new ways of working. In practical terms, this has meant adopting virtual platforms for work such as strategy meetings with partners, including the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and CCGs.

The potential to visit care settings has been disrupted, but staff have ensured, with diligent use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), that we have continued to achieve an 'eyes-on' ability.

This ability has been vital in supporting the CQC Emergency Support Framework. Whilst CQC continue to inspect where they see evidence of risk of harm, deliberate abuse, systematic neglect or a significant breakdown in leadership, their inspections are more targeted in approach. So, partners have pulled together to ensure we maintain vigilance and share intelligence.

Safeguarding has developed strong new partnerships with Public Health, and has played an intrinsic role in ensuring that care settings have adhered to infection control, and moreover has kept vulnerable people and their families at the centre of Covid responses. In addition to new and improved partnership working, there has been commitment of staff to 'business as usual', as much as practically possible with some staff undertaking alternative duties to ensure that vulnerable people were safe and reassured. Often this took the form of well-being phone contacts.

As we entered 'lockdown', there was a reduction in community referrals, but following a period of reduced contacts and formal safeguarding cases undertaken during the peak 'Covid' period of April/May, referrals and cases have returned to 'normal' levels.

Although there was uncertainty on how a 'second wave' would impact on demand, to date this has been manageable, with no significant increase in referrals noted and given that care homes were prepared given the significant improvements in process and practice in terms of infection control. This has enabled the flow of referrals to be addressed accordingly.

Sefton have participated in the optional production of data to the Local Government Association (LGA) looking at referrals/conversion to s42 and outcomes during the pandemic, and will receive feedback as to the national picture.

(Please see appended Safeguarding Dashboard)

Update on National Safeguarding Adults Week – November

The theme of Diversity was therefore adopted for Sefton’s Adult Safeguarding Week, under the umbrella of Merseyside Safeguarding Adults Board (MSAB).

A pledge was recorded by key personnel across organisations, and this was then shown throughout the week alongside other “Sound Bites” on various aspects of diversity engaging with a range of people.

3. Adult Social Care Budget

The revenue budget position is currently forecasting an overall deficit of £0.657M as at October 2010, however, this position is due to the additional impact of Covid 19 and is anticipated that it would be mitigated by Covid 19 funding made available to Sefton. This forecast includes an assumption that the efficiency programme will deliver £3.3M, and that a level of reimbursement from Health for Covid related expenditure which has been maintained at £1.65M until a reconciliation has been undertaken.

As Central Government have now announced the increase to the National Living Wage, work on proposals for **2021/22 fee increases** can now commence, with a view to consulting with Providers in a timely manner to then set fees prior to April 2021.

For the **Infection Control Fund**, a paper will be submitted to January 2021 Cabinet on the use of the remaining 20% of the fund. Early proposals are that further support to care homes be made to facilitate the implementation of the Lateral Flow Testing of visitors etc.

4. Challenges for Care Homes

There are significant voids in homes across the Borough, but an improving picture from nearly 700 at its peak. Providers are raising the issue of the lack of referrals, including those from ‘private’ residents. This issue is mirrored across the region and at national level, and we are anticipating that some care homes will close as a result of being unable to address the number of vacancies. Pre-Covid Sefton had an oversupply of care home beds compared to other similar Councils, and so we will be working with care homes to address viability issues in the New Year.

In order to respond to the viability challenge, and also to set out plans to support the quality in our care homes, a Sefton Care Homes Strategy has been developed, and will be launched in the New Year. It will address the challenges faced by our care homes, but also how we want the market to operate in the future to best meet needs, and further integration with Health to manage the market jointly. Ongoing transparent communication and engagement with providers will also be a key element of the strategy.

We launched a programme of Capital Care Home Grants on the 23rd November. We worked with care homes to develop a programme whereby they can apply for grants

to support innovation, supporting residents with Dementia, or any other developments that will improve quality of care and life experience for the residents, and cannot be funded through other streams. Applications will be considered by a panel of representatives across the Sefton Social Care Health and Voluntary sector. I will be chairing this panel.

5. Hospital Discharge Teams

As reported on the last update, new guidance in respect of hospital discharge pathways established at the start of pandemic in March was issued on the 20th August.

To update from an operational perspective, the number of COVID positive patients has decreased in the Liverpool University Foundation Trust, but remain high in Southport and Ormskirk Trust. Both Critical Care Units are still experiencing ongoing pressure, and the Acute Hospital Trusts are still facing challenges, with wards remaining closed owing to infection control purposes. We are supporting the Trusts as per statutory guidance, by providing both Trusts with support at weekends to facilitate discharge, therefore ensuring patient flow. Across both systems, Sefton Adult Social Care have input into the Winter Plans which have been submitted to NHS England, outlining the need for a growth in the Rapid Response and Reablement Services run by New Directions, if we are to continue supporting high numbers of expected patient discharges during the Winter months.

6. Mental Health

Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust/YMCA

Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust have commissioned YMCA to provide 20 step-down beds to facilitate discharge from an acute setting for individuals who are medically optimised, but require a period of reablement before moving into independent accommodation.

Nightingale House which is located on Balliol Road, went live in mid-October, and is now currently operating at 50% occupancy with further referrals planned over the next few weeks. At present this service is operating smoothly with no issues encountered at present, and we are maintaining ongoing dialogue with the service.

Whitham House which YMCA were proposing as a move on service, which is located next door to Nightingale House has now been paused, as the owner of the property is seeking planning permission. This will be vigorously opposed, as a wholly unsuitable development. It is worth noting that Nightingale House was created without consultation with this local authority or the Clinical Commissioning Group.

Ongoing updates will be provided regarding both these developments.

Alternatives to Hospital Admissions for People in Crisis

Sefton Council in partnership with Sefton CCGs and Mersey Care Foundation Trust, have submitted a bid for funding that has been made available via the Cheshire and Merseyside STP. The bid consists of the following:

1. Enhance Sefton's Mental Health Recovery Team by recruiting 2 additional Support Worker posts.

2. Establish Mental Health Crisis Cafes in Sefton, in partnership with Sefton CVS. Southport café to be prioritised in Year 1, with outreach sessions being delivered during the evening time across the borough, and South Sefton Café to be developed in Year 2. Sefton CVS will act as the lead agency. Service delivery will be supported by members of a Mental Health Voluntary Sector Alliance, that will be established to underpin this collaborative development.

The North Sefton Café will be supported by Rethink and Real Talk CIC, and will embrace a wider cross referral network that will include Citizens Advice Bureau, Brighter Living Partnership, Parenting 2000, Living Well Sefton, Southport Foodbank, High Intensity Users Project, Community Connectors and North Sefton Social Prescribers.

An open referral process will apply with individuals over the age of 18 being able to self-refer into the café.

The crisis café will provide two core functions:

- A place of safety and support for those at high risk of self-harm or suicide who would otherwise attend A&E.
- Facilitation of a Mental Health Champions' Network of experts by experience.

The Crisis Café Hub will be easily accessible by public transport in an off high street, town centre location.

Staffing will be a combination of both paid staff and volunteer support.

Sessional activities will be drawn in from the wider Alliance to complement the offer available from the core team.

Volunteers will include individuals looking to start a career in health and social care, as well as experts by experience working within the café and facilitating the Champions' Network.

All volunteers will be supported under the Sefton Volunteer Centre good practice guidance; all will have a role specification as well as individual supervisions. Formal guidance and training for volunteers will be provided.

Volunteers will be recruited through the Sefton Volunteer Centre, and through direct contact with the café's Volunteer Support Worker.