

Wiltshire Council

Health & Wellbeing Board

26 November 2020

Subject: Care Home Support

Cabinet Member: Councillor Simon Jacobs

For Information

Executive Summary

This report provides the Board with information about the support to care homes during the COVID pandemic.

Proposal(s)

This report is for information only

Terence Herbert
Chief Executive Officer

Wiltshire Council

Health & Wellbeing Board

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Subject: Care Home Support

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Key Decision: For information only

Purpose of Report

To provide the Committee with information about the support to care homes during the pandemic.

Background

The Council published a support plan for care homes on 29th May 2020. The plan had a number of themes:

- a. Financial Support
- b. Review of care homes
- c. PPE
- d. Dedicated support
- e. Staffing
- f. Health Support
- g. Designated settings

Report

The Local Authority has provided the following support to Care Homes:

Financial support-Wiltshire Council responded at an early stage to the financial pressures faced by the care home sector, with an offer sent to providers on 7 April following a lengthy consultation. The Wiltshire response was developed in consultation with Wiltshire Care Partnership and all local providers. Wiltshire Council did not restrict its financial response to Local Authority funded customers or to care homes with whom we have a contract. To date, the Council has made payments of £2.7 million to care homes and domiciliary providers to ensure their financial resilience in the face of the additional expenditure they have incurred. Providers have also had financial support through the Government's Infection Control Fund with a total of £6.3 million distributed in the first round and a further £5.3 million will be in round two.

Review of care homes-Since mid-April, the Council has worked in partnership with the CCG and CQC to review risks to and support needed by all local care homes. A COVID-19 provider team was established with a dedicated helpline and email address and operated 7 days per week (this has recently been reduced to 5 days a week but due to the increased outbreaks in care homes will be moving to 6 days a week). The COVID team collates evidence daily about any risks to care homes from:

- The national capacity tracker
- Safeguarding alerts
- Self-reporting by care homes
- PHE outbreak and death alerts
- Other sources e.g. ONS, registration of deaths

Officers report risks through a daily risk log to directors and a weekly gold report to the Chief Executive. The Health Protection Board reviews outbreaks in care homes fortnightly and considers whether there should be any restrictions to visiting.

PPE-Wiltshire Council, in partnership with the LRF, distributed PPE free to Care Homes when their local supply chain had broken down. The Council's financial offer included payment for all additional PPE that care homes themselves have purchased. Although care homes can now access free PPE via the national portal, the Council will continue to provide emergency stock.

Dedicated support-The Council, working in partnership with Wiltshire Care Partnership, the CCG and CQC, has been proactive in implementing a support programme to Care Homes. This has included the dedicated COVID team, regular webinars, thematic webinars to provide advice and support e.g. infection control, use of PPE, weekly newsletters, a Care Home Clinical Advisory Group and a BSW CCG Care Home Oversight Group chaired by the Director of Nursing & Quality. The CCG and Council also worked together to offer all care homes across Wiltshire the Infection Prevention and Control 'Train the Trainer' programme.

Staffing-The Council, CCG and Wiltshire Health & Care have a clear process in place for identifying staffing needs in care homes and providing mutual aid. It must be noted that the Council and care home providers have collectively sought to restrict the movement of staff between care homes to reduce the spread of infection and any mutual aid is risk assessed. The majority of care homes have put in place robust contingency plans for staffing which have been shared with the Council. The COVID-19 team works with providers to identify their staffing needs and any mitigating actions that can be taken to reduce the impact. Where appropriate, provider business continuity plans are activated.

Health support-In response to the request from NHS England to bring forward aspects of Enhanced Care in Care Homes, the approach in Wiltshire has been to build upon the existing local support and make this as an offer of support to care homes, rather than providing unwanted support that has been centrally defined. The offer includes regular contact and monitoring of risks, virtual weekly check-in meetings with a MDT, virtual 1:1 appointments and physical follow ups and pharmacy and medications support.

Designated settings-In the first wave of the pandemic, the Council and CCG commissioned designated settings called Hospital Discharge Support Units in two of our care homes. The HDSUs accepted admissions for COVID positive patients who no longer required care in an acute setting but were not well enough to return home. Due to the imperative that the health and care system reduces any risk of infection to care homes, there is a policy in Wiltshire that there will be no admission to a care home from hospital without a negative swab

within the last 48 hours. Any COVID positive patients who need further bedded care on discharge will be admitted to the community hospitals.

Conclusion

It should be noted that the Council's support to care homes is not in isolation and key to its success has been the partnership with Wiltshire Care Partnership, the CCG and CQC. Care Homes themselves have worked tirelessly to provide excellent care for their residents and have worked with the Council to ensure appropriate measures to prevent and control infection are in place. The care home managers and workforce have faced significant challenges, not only in protecting the most vulnerable Wiltshire residents but also in the financial uncertainty that many face as reduced demand has created significant voids in the sector.

Helen Jones-Director of Commissioning
Kate Blackburn-Director of Public Health