

Adult Care Services Report for the Health in Dacorum Meeting of 9th June 2021

There was a meeting of the Adult Care and Health Panel of Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) on 18th March 2021.

The Adult Social Care Performance Monitor for Quarter 3 of 2020/21 was looked at. Members noted that it did not show comparative data for Delayed Transfers of Care (DTC). Officers explained that the national DTC indicator had stopped being recorded since Covid-19 began, but a new way of measuring the flow and discharge of patients from hospital was being measured. Once agreed, the new measure would provide comparable data.

Members commented on the disparity between the numbers of carers receiving direct payments across the County. Officers explained that this may be due to the geographical spread of older people and the historical shortage of homecare in west Herts and therefore payments allowed for a wider choice of provision.

Care providers remained confident with regards to recruitment although the wider care sector had been impacted by the overall economic position. Internal staffing in social care had remained stable, although there were challenges in starting new employees virtually. Bespoke recruitment was going on, as well as investment in apprenticeships.

In response to a member question on the accuracy of domestic abuse figures, officers advised that the figures were accurate for reported cases. However it was expected that the figures may increase and therefore work was underway to increase support capacity if required.

The Panel received a Covid update. As of the 18th March 2021, 92% of care home residents and 82% of those with learning disabilities had received their first Covid vaccine dose. Processes were in place to catch those who had missed the first round. Approximately 70-75% of the wider Herts social care workforce had received their first dose, increasing to 90% for in-house staff. Staff webinars were being held to alleviate concerns about the vaccines.

Members requested that care home residents with dementia be prioritised for visiting rights going forward. Officer advised that care home visiting had commenced at a steady pace and an interim dementia strategy had been agreed.

In response to a member question regarding the news that the Care Quality Commission (CQC) had raised concerns over “do not resuscitate” orders, officers advised that such orders should be personal. In April 2020 it was made clear by Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) that blanket orders should not be part of practice. Officers advised that in Herts there had been communication issues but

no known blanket orders. Practices over the course of the pandemic would be reviewed.

Members commented on the balance on visiting care homes and human contact. Officers advised that the balance using PPE was appropriate.

Members raised concerns over hospital visiting rights. Officers advised that hospital visiting operated under a separate policy.

Regarding the “Discharge to Assess” funding, discussions were still ongoing. However as of 18.03.21, the funding was due to cease at the end of March 2021. Work between HCC and the CCGs was underway to create a plan should the 6-week free funded homecare be removed.

After the County Council elections on May 6th 2021, C/Cllr Richard Roberts, the former Executive Member for Adult Care became Council Leader. C/Cllr Stella Nash became the new Executive Member for Adult Care and C/Cllr Tony Kingsbury became Deputy Executive Member.

C/Cllr Fiona Guest