

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD: 8 JULY 2021**POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIR****Coronavirus Update**

Health and Wellbeing Board members will be aware of the rapidly rising rates of COVID across Leicestershire and the rest of the country. As restrictions are likely to be eased on July 19th it is essential that we maintain a message of caution to the general public. Vaccination remains our best way out of this and the success of the vaccination programme is making a dramatic difference to the number of deaths but continued good prevention behaviour still needs to go alongside this. However, we shouldn't underestimate the likely impact of a further wave on the health of our residents and the pressure on health and social care.

Health and Wellbeing Board members continue to respond with testing, enforcement, vaccination, engagement and comms. Within Leicestershire it is noticeable how well received our 'hyper-local' test sites have been where the public can pick up test kits for home use through nearly 100 sites such as leisure centres and libraries.

I'd like to thank once again the county council, districts, the NHS, the blue lights and the voluntary sector for our collective efforts in combatting COVID19.

Below is further information concerning the Health and Adults Social Care response.

Health and care response

All NHS services are currently facing a level of demand normally seen through the busiest times of year i.e. winter months. This applies to every service, whether in primary care, mental health or acute services. Our system partnership continues to work well, supporting this surge within and across organisations where possible, including with our social care colleagues.

At the time of writing, University Hospitals of Leicester (UHL) are responding to an increase in COVID-19 positive patients. It is anticipated that this increase is driven by the presence of the Delta variant (circulating within LLR). However, it is noted that the increase is smaller than previous waves and this is due to the successful roll out of the COVID-19 vaccine within LLR. At Midnight of the 30th June 2021, there were 29 patients within UHL diagnosed with COVID-19.

The Restoration and Recovery of vital elective services continues with the number of patients waiting 52 weeks for routine appointments/surgery reducing by 632 patients (between March 31st- May 31st 2021). Focus continues to remain on Cancer and urgent elective cases (referred to as P1 & P2), with the aim of reducing to pre-pandemic levels for the majority of specialties by the end of June 2021. In May, the number Outpatient appointments and elective operations was 3% over the initial plan and 91% of pre-pandemic levels.

The Restoration and Recovery of elective services is a full health economy process with all available capacity utilised to ensure the maximum number of patients are treated (safely & with the best clinical outcomes possible).

At the time of writing, the system has delivered c1.28 million vaccines across LLR to our health & social care staff and our patients. This vaccination programme has taken place across multiple primary care, LPT and UHL sites across LLR & has included both the Astrazeneca and Pfizer vaccines.

Adults Social Care

The Adults and Communities Department continues to meet individual and collective needs and has not invoked the Care Act Easements offered by national government at the start of the pandemic.

Face to face assessment and professional visits have increased as Government restrictions have eased, officers continue to use a range of mechanisms available to them to carry out visits. Risk assessments are completed when visiting is essential, the aim being to keep people safe and ensure people have the right care.

The Department is working closely with domiciliary and other providers to ensure there is capacity to deliver personal care services across the county in people's own homes and in care settings. Face to face services continue where they are essential to deliver personal care and support in the community, and resources are being redeployed to support direct provision. Market oversight continues, providing monitoring, early warning, quality support and where required direct intervention where a provider is unstable. The procurement of domiciliary care services recommenced during 2021 and the department is in the process of evaluating tenders with new services due to start in November 2021.

A high priority is to ensure flow across the health and care system through support to hospital discharge processes and reinforcing Home First services. Community Life Choices (CLC) services supported only those at highest risk during approximately the first year of the pandemic; increasingly people are now returning to using building based services in line with the easing of national restrictions and where it is safe to do so.

The Transforming Care programme continues to support the moves of people with complex Learning Disability and Mental Health support needs from long stay hospital settings to less restrictive accommodation and support. The LLR system-wide 3 year plan has been well received by NHSE and funding secured for service delivery of the plan.

Recruitment and retention of staff across adult social care remains challenging with many workers re-evaluating their work life balance and career options. A newly invigorated recruitment campaign from the council's Inspired to Care initiative is in place for the care sector and social care staff needed to ensure the safe delivery of services and sufficient capacity to meet growing demands seen during the pandemic and continuing as we recover.

The efforts of care home providers in managing infection prevention and control and supporting their workers to take the COVID-19 vaccine have reduced outbreaks in care homes to two in late June. The council will continue to work with health colleagues to support care home managers in building vaccine confidence amongst their workforce ahead of the proposed mandatory vaccination requirement for all care home staff later this year.

Approximately three-quarters of Leicestershire care home residents have a routine COVID test monthly, and two-thirds of care home staff test themselves weekly. At present the rate of infection amongst residents is 0%, and 0.05% for staff. At the time of my last report to you in January, the equivalent rates were 5% for residents and 3.2% for staff.

Despite care homes' incredible efforts to keep people safe, unfortunately 153 Leicestershire care home residents have died as a result of COVID since January. In the time since COVID pandemic records began in early April 2020, sadly 353 care home residents in the county have been confirmed as having died from COVID.

Social care services and NHS colleagues continue to work together to support the rollout of vaccinations to the social care workforce. The rollout has progressed well with 96% of care home residents in Leicestershire having their first vaccination dose and 92.5% their second. Care home staff figures are 84.4% and 72.9% respectively.

In domiciliary care, first dose take-up has reached 79.7% and 54.8% for the second, whilst internally, non CQC registered staff team rates are very positive with 99.5% having their first dose and 75.4% their second.

The Department continues to focus on communication and engagement to promote take up of the vaccine and to support staff wishing to access vaccination sites. With the national push to reach targets, information has to be actively circulated via a range of media outlets and local initiatives such as via WhatsApp Broadcast. This has built upon open and team specific Q&A sessions targeting staff who are anxious or have questions about the vaccine, to allay fears, answer queries and address myths. A Healthy Conversations Toolkit has been developed to support managers in addressing individual staff concerns, a video is being produced to inform staff who are hesitant due to fertility and pregnancy concerns and CCG colleagues have commissioned an agency to produce a campaign for younger adults.

A new communication plan and vaccination strategy is being progressed to support providers and managers with the implications associated with the potential mandatory vaccination rollout to care home staff and associated workforce to mitigate any risk.

Occupancy levels in care homes remains at a similar level to January 2021, around 80% on average across the county, which impacts on the sustainability of the sector in the longer term. The stability of the care market continues to be monitored and additional support provided where required to ensure continuation of care delivery and availability of future care and support.

In September 2020 PPE provision to support COVID-19 related social care provision moved to the Department of Health & Social Care. Free PPE was made available through a national portal to CQC regulated providers and the Local Resilience Forum for Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland has ensured access for other eligible services. Helplines and web-based ordering systems were put in place to provide further support.

Examples of this provision include packs of essential PPE for social work staff and people on direct payments; rough sleeping and domestic abuse sites have received stock as have education settings. Most recently unpaid carers have become eligible.

The most notable support came about in response to the introduction of FFP3 masks into care services where staff were undertaking aerosol generating procedures (AGPs). Such masks need to be 'fit tested' to a person's face to ensure efficacy. Local authorities, NHS partners and the Leicestershire Fire & Rescue Service came together in this multi-agency response, led by Leicestershire.

Access to free PPE has been extended to March 2022, national and local planning is underway regarding strategy thereafter.

We continue to support all care settings with the most up to date advice and guidance on infection, prevention and control and use of PPE. Provision is discussed at fortnightly provider conference calls, circulated via weekly bulletins and linked via the website.

The Council continues to allocate national COVID-19 related funding to care providers equitably and in line with the eligibility requirements and nationally set formulas. We seek to be as flexible as possible in its distribution and to make the mandated reporting from providers on its expenditure proportionate. The authority is also appraising the sustainability of adult social care markets to inform its future commissioning strategy.

Health and Wellbeing Board communications update

COVID-19 update

We have been addressing hyper-local spikes in infection rates across the county with targeted comms including an iVan (featuring static and animated digital messages encouraging testing and vaccination); letters to businesses and residents signed by the Director of Public Health for Leicestershire; targeted Facebook ads; posters for sports clubs; and regular social media posts relating to door-to-door PCR testing, rapid asymptomatic testing and home test kits, and vaccination.

COVID-19 vaccinations

Through an ongoing comms push encompassing social media posts, staff bulletins, content for Public Health and Adult Social care newsletters and internal (Yammer) messages to staff, we have been working to encourage take-up of the coronavirus vaccine (with a particular focus on the second dose), tackle vaccine hesitancy to achieve behaviour change, and challenge myths surrounding the vaccination

process. We are continuing to support our local health partners, particularly the three Clinical Commissioning Groups, with the promotion of a series of drop-in vaccination clinics across the City and County. This included comms for the “Big Covid Vaccination Weekend” (25th - 27th June).

0-19 Healthy Child Programme consultation

Following a successful engagement period in late spring, we are preparing to launch a consultation to ascertain the views of parents, carers, professionals and others involved in children’s health and wellbeing, with a view to informing the recommissioning of the 0-19 Healthy Child Programme. The consultation is due to run from 22nd July until early September.

Mental health and suicide prevention

We are preparing to support the launch of a programme of men’s peer support groups and a new peer support service, both by September. We will also be producing and sharing comms for World Suicide Prevention Day on 10th September, taking the opportunity to signpost residents and stakeholders to our mental health support resources, produced in partnership with several organisations across Leicestershire.

Weight Management Service

We have created and produced a range of resources for the newly-launched Weight Management in Pregnancy service. We are also supporting with comms materials for two children’s healthy lifestyle programmes: Cooks 4 Life, which has begun to deliver cookery sessions for children and their parents/carers within school settings; and the Child Holiday Activity Programme, which is in the planning stages.

The CURE Project – UHL smoking cessation

We are continuing to lead on design for this partnership project with Leicester City Council and UHL, creating various materials such as posters, leaflets, stickers and Z-cards for use by the CURE team in hospital settings.

Green Homes Grant – Local Authority Delivery scheme

Before and since the launch of this scheme on 14th June, we have provided extensive comms support to raise awareness of the grant amongst eligible residents. This has included a paid social media campaign on Facebook, organic social media spanning several weeks, letters to residents, the creation of two dedicated webpages, and a pending press release. The Facebook ad has been particularly successful, generating 5,931 link clicks and reaching 394,656 users. The scheme has so far received several hundred applications.

Warm Homes Fund

Over the summer months, we are continuing with intermittent social media posts, district-specific Facebook ads and mailshots, to encourage eligible residents to prepare now for winter by applying for fully funded gas connections or gas central heating.

Healthy Schools and Healthy Tots rebrand

We have begun to plan for a refresh of the Healthy Schools and Healthy Tots brands and websites, in time for the new school year in September.

Alcohol and substance misuse support – My Turning Point

We are in the process of preparing a second run of organic social media posts to signpost Leicestershire and Rutland residents to early intervention alcohol and substance misuse support, provided by Turning Point. Alongside this, we are promoting alcohol awareness training to council staff via internal comms channels (Yammer, emails to relevant departments).

Sexual health summer campaign

We are supporting Leicester Sexual Health and local partner organisation Trade Sexual Health by sharing their social media messages promoting safe sex across LLR during the summer.