

Health & Wellbeing Board 23 May 2024**Chair's Position Statement****Adult Social Care**

Adult Social Care services continue to face high demand with increasingly complex presentations. This remains a challenging position for the Council to meet the statutory requirements for assessment and review alongside funding pressures. However, positive inroads have been made into numbers of people awaiting an assessment.

Recruitment and retention remain a challenge for many adult social care providers, supporting people in Leicestershire, but this is mitigated in part by international workers carrying out social care work through the sponsorship scheme. As part of the sponsorship scheme, international social care workers and their employers are offered support by a regional team.

The Council and care providers have continued to maintain services to ensure flow through hospitals and provision for new community requests. The number of people awaiting a home care service remains very low due to good capacity in the market, and the in-house HART service continues to deliver increased reablement support to people supporting both increasing numbers of people in the community and to facilitate hospital discharges. The service now undertakes visits to UHL and community hospital wards to ensure that the right people are being provided with reablement which in turn reduces demand for ongoing need.

Limited capacity of older adults nursing care placements persists, alongside low numbers of people assessed as being eligible for Continuing Health Care and Funded Nursing Care.

The eligible cohorts for the COVID-19 spring vaccination programme include people aged 75 and older, and those who live in a care home for older adults. COVID-19 vaccinations began again in care homes on 15 April, and as with previous campaigns, a health and social care team promotes and monitors uptake throughout the programme period. A free transport offer is available in Leicestershire and Rutland for eligible people to and from their vaccination. The Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine is also being promoted to the social care workforce.

NHS

The NHS and care family across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) continues to work in partnership to deliver the objectives set out in the one- and five-year plans; much of which is directly aligned to the objectives outlined in the Health and Wellbeing Plans.

Despite a very difficult winter for health and social care - periods of industrial action and continued financial challenges - there has been much progress against the objectives outlined in the 2023/24 plans, which are linked to the delivery of the 13 pledges made through the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and partners. A full breakdown of these will be made available through the ICB annual report; however, some notable improvements include:

Pledge 3 – identifying the frailest in our communities and wrap care and support around them:

The **Home First** services, delivered in partnership with local authority partners, have consistently met the 2-hour response standard for urgent community response services, enabling more people to be assessed and treated in their place of residence – often rather than a hospital admission. The virtual ward capacity increased from 155 beds to 170 beds, with an occupancy of 80% and positive patient and carer feedback. There has been a 15% reduction in emergency admissions for falls when compared to the same point last winter and this is largely due to the newly launched falls assessment service across the County.

Pledge 4 – improve access to GP appointments:

There has been significant growth in workforce in general practices, enabling appointment levels to grow to 500,000-550,000 appointments each month, with over 70% of appointments now face to face. Over 97% of Community Pharmacies have opted to deliver Pharmacy First, meaning that patients can receive treatment without having to wait for an appointment for a range of conditions. 40% of our practices are now veteran-friendly practices and we aim to increase this further.

Pledge 8 – reducing waiting times for hospital care:

The **planned care** services have seen significant reductions in waiting times, with a 16% reduction in waiting list size from 130,000 to 109,000, a 97% reduction in 78+ week waits, an 87% reduction in 65+ week waits and a 72% reduction in 52+ week waits. For cancer, there has been a 60% reduction in patients waiting over 62 days for treatment and have seen the 'Faster diagnosis standard' being delivered, which means that more than 75% of patients are diagnosed within 28 days of referral since September 2023. In diagnostics, a 43% reduction in waiting list size from over 40,000 to 24,000 has been achieved along with our 13+ week waits reduced by 80% from over 14,000 to 2,800.

Pledge 9 – Increase the number of patients on GP registers with an annual health check:

The **Learning Disabilities** service focused not only on the number of patients accessing health checks, but this year, also focussed efforts to target those who had not had a health check for the last two years. As a result, 4,215 checks were achieved through the year, equating to over 80% of the cohort. Due to the success of this approach, it is being rolled out to mental health services as well, with a view to applying the same principles to identify those patients with a severe mental illness who require a health check.

Despite these successes, it is recognised that the whole NHS and care system remains under pressure and there are many people in the system who do not receive the service they need in a timely and coordinated manner. A significant amount of work outlined in the ICB 2024/25 Operational Plan to continue to strive, in partnership with our citizens, our partners and each other, achieve our overall goals, covering equity of access, equity of experience and equity of outcomes for those we serve in the Leicestershire area. The Plan is fully aligned to the strategy of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Public Health

It is not often that the work undertaken by Public Health is highlighted as being anything other than business as usual. But I have been really impressed with a number of initiatives recently that have been recognised, not just locally but regionally and nationally, demonstrating the ongoing commitment in improving health outcomes of our residents.

Examples of this include the work relating to smoking cessation, where the Quit Ready team have supported 1500 people to stop smoking in the past year; making us the highest performing area with the lowest prevalence across the East Midlands, and imbedding Health Impact Assessments in local plans; working with the Town and Country Planning Association and supporting our district colleagues. Following an invite by the Chair of the Health and National Policies Network to give a presentation on the work being done around health in all policies, it was highlighted that this approach is the most comprehensive process and package ever seen at a local authority.

Comms and Engagement

Since the last Health and Wellbeing Board, work to further promote and raise awareness of the Leicestershire Health and Wellbeing Board, has been developed. This includes a refreshed newsletter, which has already been shared amongst partners, and the development of a new Health and Wellbeing Board microsite. The site includes information about the Board, its strategic priorities and includes a page for users to leave feedback. It is still a work in progress, but future developments include using it as a platform to engage with users and demonstrate the outcomes and measures of success on the work being delivered against the priorities.

Plans to promote the site were temporarily paused due to the local elections but can now be resumed. In the meantime, the microsite can be accessed via this link:

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/leicestershire-health-and-wellbeing-board>

The Chair's Engagement Activity

Through my role as Chair, I am fortunate enough to get involved and support a number of local projects and system-wide initiatives all working towards improving the health outcomes of our Leicestershire residents. Despite the continuing challenges we all face, I am always amazed at the breadth of work happening across the County through the ongoing commitment of individual partners, organisations and collaborative working.

Some of the recent activity I have been involved in includes:

- Health Determinants Research Collaboration update meeting
- Panel member for the NHS Mental Health Cafe grants application scheme
- Participated in several interview panels relating to research opportunities across the system including the recruitment of a new ICB Chair
- Supported the Health and Wellbeing Development Session themed on the End of Life/Dying Well priorities of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy