

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD: 24 FEBRUARY 2022**POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIR****Coronavirus update**

Rates of Coronavirus cases have fallen substantially since the peak after the New Year but remain at significantly high levels. With the removal of all legally enforced precautions today it is up to us to contain the virus by respecting others distance, wearing a mask in crowded places and getting vaccinated.

The Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Health and care system remains under pressure as it seeks to fully restore and recover service delivery across all areas of health and care. It has been a difficult winter period, particularly with the advent of Omicron and the resulting impact on service demand, the enhanced vaccination programme, staff absence rates and capacity within providers of health and care.

For non-acute services such as primary care, focus remains on three key deliverables; access to services, dealing with back log of care and continuing delivery of the vaccination programme. In terms of access, significant work has gone into enhancing access to general practice, including additional telephony capability, increased capacity in support services such as optometry, pharmacy and mental health services and ensuring all practices remain resilient. Despite ongoing access pressures, the backlog of care was further reduced by approximately 8,000 patients through January 2022 and continues to be an area of focus for all practices.

For Home First services, plans remain to achieve the 80% national standard of two-hour response. Whilst services in the City and Rutland have been achieving this standard since the advent of the 'Better Care Fund', services in the county had not done so – however, January data is now reporting a 75% compliance rate. This is a significant milestone and it is expected that this figure will continue to grow as more staff are recruited. Stability of the social care market has also been a significant issue for all local authorities during this period, supported by a one off incentive payment to care staff in order to encourage retention.

Acute services remain under daily significant pressures, with more patients admitted daily than discharged, causing poor flow and in turn delays to ambulance handovers. At various points of the day, there can be upwards of 40 patients walking into the emergency department, with some patients reporting poor access to primary, elective or social care services as their reason for attendance. An additional temporary paramedic led service on-site at the LRI has been opened to support this through the winter period and is regularly seeing upwards of 70 patients a day.

Despite the pressure on the emergency side of acute care, the system continues to work on reducing the numbers of patients awaiting elective care. During the last 2 months, two stand alone 'vanguard theatres have been mobilised to provide temporary additional capacity into the system. These are both operational and will support back log reduction. Plans to commission these through 22/23 are also on track, in recognition that the back log will take a significant amount of time to clear.

Our current modelling shows that we will treat most patients awaiting 104 weeks by the end of March and we are currently on trajectory to do this for all day-case and non-admitted. We expect to have in the region of 1000 admitted cases left to treat and these will be booked in for quarter one of 23/24.

There remains a considerable amount of risk within the health and care system currently and this is expected to continue through the rest of the expected winter surge. Organisations across health and care continue to work together to tackle this issue of flow, with clear priorities emerging for 22/23.

Adult Social Care

Adult Social Care services continue to face high demand, which is presenting a challenging position for the Council, both in respect to the capacity of providers to meet increasing levels of need and the capacity of the Council to fund services. A high priority is to ensure flow across the health and care system through support to hospital discharge processes and reinforcing Home First services.

The Adults and Communities Department is working closely with adult social care providers to ensure there is capacity to deliver personal care services across the county in people's own homes and in care settings. Market oversight continues, providing monitoring, intelligence sharing between agencies, early warning, quality support and where required direct intervention where a provider is unstable. However, there has been an increase in the demands for services and the closure of a limited number of care services as we move out of the pandemic; factors have included recruitment and retention, provider closures and the handing back of care packages.

Home care services have been stretched throughout the Christmas and new year period as demand has continued to outstrip supply. Providers have experienced very high absence levels due to COVID-19, isolation and other factors, and recruitment remains a challenge. The Council and care providers have managed to maintain a level of service to ensure flow through hospitals and provision for new community requests although there remain a relatively high, albeit reducing, number of people awaiting care at any one time and pick up times for new care packages can take one to two weeks. The Department has re-opened its Home Care for Leicestershire framework with a view to increasing the number of care providers it has on its framework to deliver home care services to ensure people can be supported at home.

In addition, the Council continues to see people placed in temporary and interim care placements due to a shortage of home care provision on discharge from hospital in some circumstances.

The position on mandatory vaccination for care home workers and of the wider health and social care system is expected to change following national consultation, and it is now anticipated that this may no longer be a requirement. If so, then the Council will need to work closely with providers to consider the implications of this new direction.

Despite the best efforts of care home providers in managing infection prevention and control and supporting their workers to take the COVID-19 vaccine, during December and January the number of outbreaks in care homes rose to its highest level since the start of the pandemic. Whilst most positive tests relate to staff, there have been a high number of residents also testing positive through this period. It is worth noting however that mortality numbers have reduced and people showing symptoms have reported being less unwell.

The increased outbreak level is the result of many factors including high levels of community transmission and waning resident and worker protection from their initial vaccinations. The booster programme has targeted care home settings and in early February, 89% of residents have received their booster and 56% of staff.

Occupancy levels in care homes remains at a similar level to January 2021, around 82% 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.

Working together, the local authority and local NHS partners have funded a number of workforce retention schemes including a local winter retention payment for staff in CQC registered services, as well as bringing forward the rise in National Living Wage from April to January for participating providers in order to support the social care workforce.

The Council continues to allocate national COVID-19 related funding to care providers equitably and in line with the eligibility requirements, conditions of receipt, and nationally set formulas. The Council seeks to be as flexible as possible in its distribution and to make the mandated reporting from providers on its expenditure proportionate.

In September 2020, PPE was made available free through a national portal to CQC regulated providers and this facility has now been extended through to March 2023 .

The Local Resilience Forum for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland has ensured access for other eligible services, including social work staff and people on direct payments; rough sleeping and domestic abuse sites have received stock as have education settings, district and borough councils and unpaid carers. Faith Groups and voluntary sector organisations.

Community Life Choices (CLC) services have again been impacted due to increased transmission rates, with some providers restricting services due to reduced staff numbers or outbreaks, whilst many recipients of services deciding to stay at home. The online provision introduced during the pandemic that was offered as an alternative to building based services is now a choice. CLC services have been re-procured, with the new contracts having commenced in late 2021.

Joint Strategic Needs Assessments Cycle

The County Council's Business Intelligence Service is currently awaiting the release of Census data from the Office of National Statistics in relation to the recent national Census, which is due in Spring 2022. This will provide important updated JSNA underpinning data in relation to the JSNA chapters. Once the relevant data is released, the next step will be to work with partners to explore significant findings in the data as well as updated Public Health Outcomes Framework data, to revisit priorities for JSNA chapters in light of the Covid pandemic and its impact, along with exploring the latest Public Health Service commissioning priorities. Provisional areas flagged for consideration at this stage are Health inequalities, oral health, and carers, which will be brought to a future Health and Wellbeing Board for consideration.

Healthwatch Stakeholder Survey

Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire (HWLL) are the independent voice for the public in health and social care services in Leicester and Leicestershire. HWLL are seeking the views of stakeholders on effectiveness and where improvements can be made in the services provided.

This [survey](#) will take around 5 minutes to complete and answers will be collated with other responses to develop a report and action plan for improvements that will be shared with commissioners, and published on the HWLL website for the public.

Health and Wellbeing Board Communications Update

Mental health and suicide prevention

The Council has launched the Get The Ball Rolling campaign. This was a partnership with Start A Conversation (County and City councils) and United Leicester. Promotional materials have been designed including posters and beer mats using sporting messages to encourage people to talk more openly about mental health. Everards Brewery have supported, and materials can be found in 100 pubs across the City, County and Rutland. In addition the authorities are looking at providing materials to sports clubs across Leicester and supporting with materials for Veterans Day at Leicester Racecourse.

Start A Conversation website

A major project to update the website is underway. This has involved a new site map for improved user experience, elevated design and functionality and a rewrite for more sensitivity. An update concerning information about services available locally has also been undertaken.

<https://startaconversation.cportals.cuttlefish.com/>

Men's Weight Management Service

Groups are operating across the County and based on feedback from two groups, the Council has developed a new resource pack for service users. This has a different look and feel, and includes new activities that are more suitable for the users. The Council has been trialling new content across its social media channels including Instagram.

The WMS website has been refreshed and we have reduced bounce rates on the site as a result.

Healthy Schools/+ and Healthy Tots

The Council has developed a new communications pack for the re-launch of the programmes. These include posters, certificates, articles of accreditation, colouring packs and social media kits for settings and schools to share their achievements within the community.

Collaboration with Highways Team

The Authority is working with staff at depots to use their digital boards to promote health messages with a view of setting up information stands and delivering Weight Management and stop smoking groups in the future.

My Turning Point

Throughout Dry January the Council promoted alcohol awareness and continued into 'Feel Good Feb'. The webpage averaged 30 visits a day from social media throughout these months.

Warm Homes

As the offer is currently limited to energy advice and guidance, we have created a digital guide to 'stay well' and be a good neighbour. This is an article on LinkedIn which suggests helpful hints like keeping the number of First Contact + written down near a phone, and keeping batteries for torches etc., paired with energy advice.

Awareness Days

The Council has utilised social media social media (internal and external) to promote and raise awareness of the following key dates:

- Cervical Cancer Prevention Week – included an interactive quiz and inclusive thread of what to expect during screening
- Fizz Free Feb
- Time To Talk Day – launch of Get The Ball Rolling
- Children's Mental Health Week

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