

## **NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **CABINET**

## **COVID-19 Response: Adults and Community Wellbeing**

### **1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide an update on the current position in respect of the COVID-19 response across functions within Adults and Community Wellbeing.
- 1.2 The response to date is set in the context of the business continuity arrangements, national guidance and the Council's Mid-term recovery plan.

### **2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 The Council's approach to its business continuity response to the COVID-19 outbreak and actions taken to implement government guidelines have been rooted in the values, principles and ambitions of the Council plan, and furthered through the strong partnerships within North Lincolnshire, framed under the following priorities:
  - keeping people safe and well
  - protecting the local economy
  - enabling communities to remain resilient
  - protecting vulnerable people

Whilst at the same time ensuring good governance and sound financial practice across the Council.

- 2.2 National advice and guidance has been incorporated into the local response as it became available. The most recent national restrictions were announced on 4 January 2021 and The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 3) and (All Tiers) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 came into force on 6 January 2021.

- 2.3 The Council monitors the guidance daily issued by the government in relation to supporting vulnerable adults during the COVID-19 outbreak. This guidance is reviewed and where appropriate implemented and shared across the social care workforce of North Lincolnshire.
- 2.4 The Council has continued to provide all statutory services to adults with care and supports need throughout the pandemic although some external services have been reduced by the national restrictions, such as day support in the first wave.
- 2.5 In May 2020 the Care Home Support Plan was first published and has been continually reviewed, updated with actions identified and implemented throughout. The oversight group continues to meet twice weekly, overseeing the implementation of the plan and to oversee the management of outbreaks in care homes. Further support to the care sector during the pandemic to enable them to continue to provide quality care includes:
- The launch of the 'Proud to Care' recruitment portal to raise the profile of working in the care sector, supporting recruitment into the sector to create a sustainable workforce supporting people to be safe and well and remain independent in their own homes. Through the Proud to Care campaign and additional training, specialist skills and knowledge will be increased within the provider sector to support more complex people to live well in the community.
  - Regular contact and correspondence to provide support and information and understand the issues across the care home sector.
  - Support to implement care home testing and vaccination programmes.
  - Support and advice regarding visiting arrangements both in and out of care homes, when tiers were introduced, second and third periods of national restrictions and across the Christmas period.
  - Distribution of the 'Adult Social Care Infection Control Fund Round Two' to support Infection Prevention Control measures to reduce the rate of COVID-19 transmission within and between care settings, in particular by helping to reduce the need for staff movements between sites.
- 2.6 The 'Caring for the Carers survey' took place during September and October and provided an overview of the wellbeing of carers and the issues they face; they told us that:
- The impact of COVID-19 on their lives has been significant. They told us they felt safe but tired.
  - During the first period of national restrictions the lack of day care and the challenges in residential respite had impacted.

The Council has because of this insight supported external and voluntary providers of day care to ensure COVID-19 safe practice and sustainable opening arrangements are in place.

Support continues for people and carers to access on-line partnership meetings, by using technological and digital solutions to enable people to stay engaged and for the Council to hear their voices.

- 2.7 The Safeguarding Adults Board conference titled 'Listen to me and hear my voice' took place. It was facilitated and delivered in partnership with adults with lived experience and professionals. It was attended by over 200 people and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive.
- 2.8 The Winter plan policy paper was published setting out the key elements of the national support available to the care sector during the winter months. The Council, with local health and social care partners and the voluntary and community sector, worked together to ensure that North Lincolnshire was prepared for the additional winter pressures, particularly a growing resurgence of COVID-19 cases, to support vulnerable people. Actions taken to support individuals over winter include:
- Increased capacity for Home First Community, more people are wanting to remain at home for longer.
  - Full implementation of the new discharge to assess policy to ensure people continue to be safely discharged from hospital. In December, a targeted discharge event was undertaken over five weekdays focusing on reviewing everyone in hospital and the designated short stay placements. The aim was to return people home as quickly and safely as possible, in time for Christmas, and to free up capacity. This event has resulted in the hospital not experiencing the pressures reported in local areas this year. The process is being repeated to mainstream the practise into the future and to continue to apply the learning.
  - Working with the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Alliance to support to the health and care system, including a series of collaborations to support a Community First Approach and the development of Community Champions as 'trusted leaders' in support of core public health messages.
  - Establishment of the Social Prescribing Alliance to support the initiation of Social Prescribing Link Workers across the PCN networks; supporting people at the earliest opportunity, to remain independent for as long as possible.
  - Further development of End-of-Life Care across all partners with an electronic solution to support coordination of care as well as training across all care providers.
- 2.9 Additional accommodation for younger adults became available and individuals moved into the Poplar Avenue supported living development.
- 2.10 The Independent Living Service, Home First Community was launched with the aim to provide early help and support, to enable individuals to continue living independently at home. This has proved helpful considering increased demand for community care at this time.
- 2.11 The health and wellbeing of the workforce is monitored through wellbeing assessments, provision of advice and information, and the launch of the 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' providing opportunities for virtual informal and formal meetings.

2.12 During this time the request for help and support has noticeably changed, with individuals expressing increased anxiety, low confidence, and stress. Individuals are requiring help with the lower-level aspects of daily living; less people are electing to enter care and are preferring to remain at home. The consequences of this, are the need to invest in a wider variety and increased offer of support at home, to continue to prioritise the most vulnerable to remain in their home. More people who have the ability to self-purchase support are seeking advice and guidance.

2.13 The Principal Social Worker continually monitors the overall workforce capacity to inform decisions regarding the enactment of any Care Act easements or re-designation of staff roles and responsibilities. This has not been required to date and remains under close review during this latest period of national restrictions.

### **3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

3.1 Cabinet are asked to consider the report.

### **4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

4.1 Business continuity across Adults and Community Wellbeing continues to be maintained.

### **5. FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (e.g. LEGAL, HR, PROPERTY, IT, COMMUNICATIONS etc.)**

5.1 The financial implications of COVID-19 are being closely monitored against the emergency funding from government. The impact of funding assumptions and financial sustainability are regularly reported to Cabinet.

### **6. OTHER RELEVANT IMPLICATIONS (e.g. CRIME AND DISORDER, EQUALITIES, COUNCIL PLAN, ENVIRONMENTAL, RISK etc.)**

6.1 Decision taken as part of the response to the crisis phase have been made in accordance with the Council's schemes of delegation.

### **7. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)**

7.1 Not applicable for the purposes of this report.

### **8. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED**

8.1 Any decisions and actions taken have been done in consultation as appropriate.

9. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 That Cabinet notes the response to COVID-19 as outlined in the report.

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**Background Papers used in the preparation of this report: None**