

**From:** Clair Bell, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health  
Richard Smith, Corporate Director Adult Social Care and Health

**To:** Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee – 1 December 2021

**Subject:** **Adult Social Care Pressures Plan 2021-2022**

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Previous Pathway of Paper:** N/A

**Future Pathway of Paper:** N/A

**Electoral Divisions:** All

**Summary:** The report will provide an overview of the current pressures faced by Adult Social Care and Health and the mitigating actions in place to ensure service continuity and resilience. The report focuses on outlining the strategic and operational response to a range of factors including COVID-19, vacancies in the health and social care workforce, waiting lists for care and support, winter pressures and budgetary pressures. The full Adult Social Care Pressures Plan 2021-2022 identifies the component elements of the directorate's response to the unprecedented pressures on the health and social care system and identifies owners for each of the response elements.

**Recommendation:** The Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee is asked to **NOTE** and **CONSIDER** the content of the report and the Adult Social Care Pressures Plan 2021-2022.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Adult Social Care and Health Directorate has continued to operate in an extremely challenging environment throughout 2021, as it manages the COVID-19 recovery amidst a range of local and national challenges. Throughout winter 2020-2021 the key focus for the directorate was on managing the COVID-19 response, aligned to guidance from the Department of Health and Social Care. Whilst managing COVID-19 remains a priority as we head into winter 2021-2022, the vaccination programme has enabled a significant return to normality, which has resulted in a broader range of factors and pressures that the Adult Social Care and Health Directorate must manage.
- 1.2 The Adult Social Care Pressures Plan 2021-2022, attached as Appendix 1, identifies the factors which are likely to impact the operating environment in the coming months, and the strategic and operational actions which are being taken to ensure directorate resilience.

- 1.3 The plan will be maintained as live document which will enable Adult Social Care and Health to continually review its business processes and escalation procedures, ensure that risks and issues are addressed at an early stage and implement appropriate mitigations to support service continuity.

## **2. Context**

- 2.1 Adult Social Care and Health has historically faced system pressure during the winter period due to its interdependencies with the NHS, the need to support hospital discharges and increased demand for care and support during winter. In 2021-2022, challenges which pre-date COVID-19 have been compounded by the impact of the pandemic and result in a particularly difficult set of challenges for the months ahead.
- 2.2 Local authorities have seen increased budget pressures in recent years, which has impacted on the funding available for adult social care services. This is in the context of increased demographic pressures, with an aging population and people living longer with more complex needs. Spend on adult social care has inevitably increased during the pandemic to manage the increased costs of services, staffing and equipment including PPE, as well as increased levels of demand and complexity of need particularly as restrictions are lifted.
- 2.3 At the same time, the directorate is managing increased waiting lists for services due to the workforce pressures which are being seen across multiple sectors but which are particularly acute in health and social care. Skills for Care figures from October 2021 indicated a vacancy rate of 105,000 jobs in adult social care services, which represents approximately 6.8% of the total adult social care workforce in England. Turnover rates across the sector also remain high, at 28.5% in 2020-2021 and with employers reporting that retention is now more difficult than before the pandemic.
- 2.4 Whilst the government's 'Build Back Better: Plan for Health and Social Care' acknowledges the challenges that the health and social care sector faces and plans to make an extra £36 billion available over the next three years to address these issues, the Local Government Association has raised concerns about what proportion of this money will be allocated to adult social care. The Local Government Association also identifies a remaining funding gap of £1.5 billion required to stabilise the care provider market.
- 2.5 The market faces additional pressure from the impact of compulsory vaccination for front line care workers. This requirement took effect from 11 November 2021 and will be monitored by the Care Quality Commission. Data held in September 2021 indicated that 90% of the social care workforce affected by this requirement had been vaccinated, however this left 1700 workers unvaccinated who may exit the social care workforce. Additionally, the government is currently consulting on a proposal to extend the requirement to be fully vaccinated to all health and social care workers, which may cause further workers to leave the sector.

- 2.6 In addition to financial and workforce pressures, there are concerns about the ongoing high COVID-19 infection rate and the impact this will have on health and social care services when combined with normal seasonal illnesses. During winter 2020-2021 rates of seasonal illnesses such as flu, respiratory viruses and noroviruses were extremely low due to lockdown and social distancing. It is anticipated that these illnesses will rise significantly during winter 2021-2022 and that people's resilience to infections will be lower. As well as increasing hospital admissions and demand for discharge and social care services, staff sickness is likely to impact health and social care workforce capacity during the winter months.
- 2.7 The totality of the challenges outlined above mean that Adult Social Care and Health faces a period of sustained pressure and must be proactive and agile in managing its response. The Adult Social Care Pressures Plan identifies a range of activities which will support both the directorate's own staff and services and Kent's provider market to ensure they have appropriate business continuity plans and risk mitigations in place to sustain service delivery.

### **3. Components of the Adult Social Care Pressures Plan 2021-2022**

- 3.1 The Adult Social Care Pressures Plan 2021-2022 collates several component plans which outline the operational and tactical preparations and response to pressures, the strategic activities and the collaborative working being progressed with partner organisations and the provider market.
- 3.2 The Resilience and Emergency Planning section of the plan identifies a number of tools and mechanisms to support directorate resilience and business continuity, including the Operational Pressures Escalation Plan. Many of these tools were tested throughout winter 2020-2021 and lessons learned from this period have been incorporated in the updated versions. The plans will be maintained as live documents throughout winter 2021-2022 and the Adult Social Care and Health Senior Management team will maintain oversight of their implementation and any required escalations to the Corporate Director.
- 3.3 The System Discharge Pathways Programme was established in autumn 2020 and has worked with a range of partners to improve discharge services, embed a discharge to assess approach and manage demand and capacity in discharge services. The programme will continue to deliver services in a more integrated way and ensure services are aligned to the needs of Kent residents in the coming months. The programme works with Kent Community Health Foundation Trust, Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group and representatives from Kent's Integrated Care Partnerships to ensure a holistic, system-wide approach to decision making and the utilisation of resources in Kent.
- 3.4 The Operational Capacity Management Plan for Winter 2021-2022 identifies the recruitment activities, extended working arrangements and staff redeployment contingency arrangements that will be implemented for Adult Social Care and Health teams throughout the winter period. These arrangements will enable continuity of service and will also ensure that extended working arrangements

support partners in the health system to manage demand on their services and hospital discharges.

- 3.5 The plans for Adult Social Care's Commissioned Services encompass work with Kent's provider market to support their short-term preparedness and resilience and seek to encourage long-term sustainability through market development. Activities under the Commissioned Services offer are aligned to preventative actions to keep people safe and well at home, supporting safe and timely discharge from hospital and helping people to recover and thrive in their own home. The System-Wide Market Pressures Action Plan also implements additional capacity in services and identifies dedicated commissioners for locality areas to ensure providers receive targeted, timely support.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1 A number of funding streams have been made available to support the Adult Social Care Pressures Plan and winter resilience activities. Both the Infection Control Fund and Hospital Discharge Funding will continue until 31 March 2022 and will be used to support Kent's provider market and provide additional capacity in services. To date, KCC has received £10.3m for 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021 and £7.7m for 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021. Central government have made £11.9m available for 1<sup>st</sup> October to 31<sup>st</sup> March.
- 4.2 Central government has recently announced a further £4.2m to Kent from the Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund. The purpose of this allocation is to support local authorities to address adult social care workforce capacity pressures in their geographical area through recruitment and retention activity this winter.
- 4.3 Further detail of the planned use of funds is available in the full 'Adult Social Care Pressures Plan'.

#### **5. Equalities implications**

- 5.1 An EQIA is in draft for the Adult Social Care and Health Pressures Plan 2021-2022.

#### **6. Other corporate implications**

- 6.1 The delivery of the Adult Social Care Pressures Plan 2021-2022 builds on the 'Adult Social Care and Health Winter Pressure Plan 2020-2021' and the lessons learned from partnership working, joint commissioning and contingency planning in that period. Lessons learned from the delivery of the Adult Social Care Pressures Plan 2021-2022 will be owned by the owners of the component plans and will be shared corporately where appropriate.

#### **7. Conclusions**

- 7.1 The challenges facing Adult Social Care and Health in the coming months are unprecedented in terms of the collective impact of financial, workforce and

health stressors on the system. Whilst robust plans have been tested and put in place to manage pressures across the health and social care system, there is a high level of concern about the level of pressure that services will face. The Directorate will need to maintain an agile, collaborative and creative approach to respond to this unique set of circumstances and will continue to work closely with its partners to prioritise the health and wellbeing of Kent residents.

## 8. Recommendations

8.1 Recommendation(s): The Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee is asked to **NOTE** and **CONSIDER** the content of the report and the Adult Social Care Pressures Plan 2021-2022.

## 9. Report Author

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