

From: Clair Bell, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health
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To: Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee – 18 May 2022

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

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: Adult Social Care and Health Directorate Management Team – 13 April 2022

Future Pathway of report: None

Electoral Division: All

Summary: The report will provide an overview of the implementation and outcomes of the Adult Social Care Pressures Plan 2021-2022. The report focuses on the outcomes of contingency plans to manage pressure on services, financial and budget implications of the actions that were taken and the outcomes for Kent County Council's partners and Kent's residents.

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

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Adult Social Care Pressures Plan 2021-2022 was developed in order to ensure that the Council had planned for and was able to respond to the significant pressures that were anticipated during the winter period. Its development built on the Adult Social Care Winter Plan 2020-2021 and the lessons learned from the review of its development and implementation.
- 1.2 It is good practice to ensure that there are well developed and robust plans to manage winter pressures under normal circumstances, and with the ongoing challenges of COVID-19 and its impact on the health and social care system, a clear plan was essential to ensure that appropriate arrangements were in place.
- 1.3 The Adult Social Care Pressures Plan 2021-2022 incorporated the requirements of the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) 'COVID-19 Response: Autumn and Winter Plan 2021'. This plan detailed the key elements of the contingency plans that would be implemented in the event of a significant rise in COVID-19 cases during the winter, as well as the main actions for local authorities, NHS organisations, social care providers, and the voluntary and community sector.

- 1.4 The Adult Social Care Pressures Plan 2021-2022 also built on previous winter resilience activities, including the Adult Social Care Winter Pressure Plan 2020-2021. The previous Adult Social Care Winter Pressure Plan was successful in managing a time of significant pressure. In 2020-2021 Kent was particularly impacted by the UK's second wave of COVID-19 and several acute hospitals operated at full capacity. The lessons learned from the success of previous winter planning and resilience activities were incorporated within the Adult Social Care Pressures Plan and its scope was broadened to recognise the wider range of pressures faced in the wake of the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 1.5 In addition to the pressures associated to COVID-19, adult social care services have been impacted by Local Authority budget pressures in recent years, combined with the increased demographic pressures of an ageing population and people living longer with more complex needs. These budgetary pressures were compounded by the necessary expenditure throughout COVID-19. Additionally, workforce vacancy rates and high turnover have continued to increase across health and social care, resulting in increased waiting lists for services.
- 1.6 Furthermore, the cost-of-living increase that has been seen nationally is particularly impactful for people on lower wages, which includes a large proportion of the adult social care workforce. This workforce is historically mobile and likely to seek opportunities in other sectors where wages will be equitable or higher, such as retail and hospitality.
- 1.7 Workforce sustainability issues in health and social care were also compounded by the requirement for all care home workers and other visiting professionals to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, unless they have an exemption. Whilst this guidance was revoked on 15 March 2022, the mandatory vaccination period resulted in workers choosing to exit the health and social care workforce and it is difficult to determine whether they will return.
- 1.8 The combined challenges of usual winter pressures with the additional factors highlighted above resulted in a high level of concern about the pressures that would be faced in the winter 2021-2022 period. As a result, a range of robust contingency planning activities were carried out to ensure that high-quality, safe and timely support continued to be provided to everyone who needed it.
- 1.9 This report provides an update on the outcomes associated to key aspects of the Adult Social Care Pressures Plan 2021-2022, and the impact that it had over the winter period. Lessons will be taken forward to ensure that future arrangements continue to be robust.

2. Adult Social Care Pressures Plan 2021-2022 Review

- 2.1 The Adult Social Care Pressures Plan 2021-2022 consisted of six key elements, which were:
 - Resilience and Emergency Planning, including the Operational Pressures Escalation Plan

- The System Discharge Pathways Programme, including joint working with health partners to support joint commissioning and underpin Government hospital discharge policies
- Operational Capacity Management Plan for Winter 2021-22, including the identified additional resources to manage increased demand on adult social care services
- Strategic Commissioning activities to support and build resilience in the adult social care provider market, including the System-Wide Market Pressures Action Plan
- Financial Implications, including plans for funding streams made available to Kent County Council (KCC) to support resilience activities
- Risk Management, including risk protocols and risk owners.

2.2 When comparing the winter periods 2020-2021 against 2021-2022, Adult Social Care saw a slight decrease of 2.6% in contacts to the Directorate in 2021-2022. Contacts to the Directorate mean people getting in touch via front door channels including ARMS. Despite the decrease in contacts, the Directorate managed the demand of an increase of 22.3% in incoming reviews and increase of 5.6% in incoming assessments. Despite the continuing pressures of COVID-19, high levels of staff sickness and workforce recruitment and retention challenges, the Adult Social Care Pressures Plan 2021-2022 was successful in anticipating risks and implementing appropriate mitigating actions.

Resilience and Emergency Planning

- 2.3 In line with previous resilience planning, the development of the plan was supported by a range of stakeholders including the Adult Social Care Directorate Business and Planning Team, service managers across adult social care, colleagues in finance and partner organisations in health. Oversight of the plan was provided through a verbal update to the Corporate Management Team in October 2021 and submission of the plan to Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee in December 2021.
- 2.4 Building on work conducted in 2021-2022, Resilience and Emergency Planning delivered a number of workstreams to support directorate resilience which included lessons learned activities, business continuity plans and exercises to stress test plans. The enhanced resilience measures developed and implemented in 2021 were put to the test in September during the UK-wide fuel crisis.
- 2.5 Services across Adult Social Care and Health were able to successfully implement a range of tactics and response options detailed in the Adult Social Care and Health Fuel Supply Disruption Response Plan, Incident Management Plan, and service Business Continuity Plans to maintain all critical functions throughout the incident.
- 2.6 Disruption to Adult Social Care and Health operations was mainly caused by the impact of the scenario on contracted providers. In September 2021, the sector was already under significant pressure due to a range of factors including Covid-19, implications of EU Exit, and loss of staff to other sectors. The fuel

crisis simply added additional pressure to an already highly stressed market. Providers implemented their business continuity plans, reduced services where possible and in a significant number of cases were unable to service contracted home care calls. Adult Social Care and Health worked with providers, the voluntary sector, families and unpaid carers to ensure the most vulnerable people were supported through this period, and no one was put at risk.

- 2.7 A full debrief, following this significant event, highlighted known issues with KCC, local multi-agency and central government planning. These issues included a recommendation in the national plan that organisations such as KCC should be self-sufficient in managing their fuel for up to 10 days. However, this has clear logistical challenges and had not been implemented. Additionally, people delivering critical services who were reliant on their own vehicles, including District Nurses and care workers, were excluded from the national guidance on which vehicles should be prioritised for fuel.
- 2.8 Lessons were identified and recommendations for improvement are currently being taken forward. A cross-border Local Resilience Forum (LRF) group has been established with the following objectives:
- Establish common lessons that were identified during LRF debriefs regarding the September-October 2021 fuel shortage
 - Identify and collate recommendations to feed back to central government for inclusion in or as an extension to the current national fuel plan
 - Advise central government of gaps in current national planning and urge them to adopt suggested changes to support LRFs during future incidents
 - Provide local understanding of the national planning assumption of 10 days fuel resilience to Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
- 2.9 The Operational Pressures Escalation Plan has been well established in Adult Social Care and Health for several years. It continues to be used year-round to support the appropriate response to surges in demand across the Kent and Medway Health and Social Care System.
- 2.10 The Operational Pressures Escalation Plan was successfully deployed on a number of occasions during the winter months in response to Acute Hospital Critical Incident declarations. With the support of partner agencies across the system, implementing their own Plans beneath the overarching NHS England Operational Pressures Escalation Level Framework, these periods of intense pressure were managed down swiftly.
- 2.11 The provider market in Kent was already under pressure due to workforce challenges across adult social care before the winter period. Care and Support in the Home services are critical to supporting other parts of the health and social care system by enabling flow from short-term discharge and enablement services. As the Kent Enablement at Home service continued to maintain an increasing number of people waiting for a longer-term care package this

inevitably hampered the Authority's ability to fully implement the Operational Pressures Escalation Plan. Lessons arising from this response and innovative solutions developed operationally are currently under review for consideration in a revised Plan due to be validated through multi-agency exercise starting from September 2022.

- 2.12 Between Friday 18 February and Monday 21 February 2022, services across Adult Social Care and Health were affected by storms Eunice and Franklin, resulting in high winds causing danger to life from flying debris and fallen trees, damage to buildings, significant disruption to most types of transport, power outages and local loss of telephone and internet services.
- 2.13 A full debrief of the response to this significant incident is underway, but initial feedback suggests that the directorate responded well to this severe weather event. The successful implementation of service level Business Continuity Plans allowed critical services to continue with limited/minor disruption.
- 2.14 The directorate Incident Management Plan and associated tools and resources were deployed in response to widespread power outages. Welfare provision for households and communities without power was co-ordinated through the multi-agency Kent Resilience Forum Vulnerable People and Communities Cell.
- 2.15 Debriefs for KCC, the NHS and a full multi-agency debrief were delivered in March. Lessons arising from the way this incident was handled including any notable practice will be reported to relevant management teams and any recommendations for improvement will be taken forward through established programmes of work in 2022.

System Discharge Pathways Programme

- 2.16 The System Discharge Pathways Programme was established in autumn 2020 following a jointly commissioned review of Kent's hospital discharge pathways in summer 2020. The review found Kent did not have a whole-system, holistic approach to delivering effective discharge pathways and set out recommendations for the delivery of consistent, needs-based services aligned to the developing Integrated Care System. Adult social care worked closely with partners in Kent Community Healthcare Foundation Trust and Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group to establish a programme of work to deliver activities aligned to the review's recommendations.
- 2.17 The programme is now in Phase 2 of its delivery and managing workstreams to promote improved operational joint working, joint pathway design and commissioning of services, and integrated reporting to enable improved visibility of pressures and joint decision making.
- 2.18 Throughout the programme's work to date, collaborative working across partner organisations has enabled better use of system-wide resources and provided a forum for the oversight and management of operational pressures in a range of discharge services.

2.19 The programme is now in the process of recruiting a Health and Care Integration Lead who will oversee future phases of the System Discharge Pathways Programme and play a key role in shaping the future of health and care integration for Kent.

Operational Capacity Management Plan for Winter 2021-2022

2.20 The Operational Capacity Management Plan for Winter 2021-2022 identified a number of staffing requirements and initiatives to meet the demands of winter 2021-2022, which included extended service delivery hours, increased staffing capacity delivered through overtime and temporary recruitment, and redeployment of staff to other areas of the directorate.

2.21 The Area Referral Management Service (ARMS) managed an increased level of referrals during the winter period and worked closely with Health partners to support pressures in their acute and Rapid Response services. Extended working hours enabled the service to respond to 2,322 contacts between 1 October 2021 and 8 March 2022 and deliver a total of 260 Contact Assessments during this period. Winter pressures funding allocated to the service was fully utilised to recruit an additional Senior Contact Assessment Officer which supported the service in managing the increased level of contacts.

2.22 The Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP) service implemented additional staff shifts to ensure the service was able to meet minimum staffing numbers amidst disruption resulting from COVID-19 and staff sickness. Winter Pressures funding was utilised to cover resourcing related to COVID-19 absences, including staff testing positive for COVID-19 and self-isolating whilst waiting for test results. Additionally, one agency AMHP worker was employed on a part-time basis from January – March 2022 to provide increased resource. As a result of implementing contingency plans and additional resource, the AMHP service was successfully able to deliver all required Mental Health Act assessments during the winter period.

2.23 The Occupational Therapy (OT) service planned to recruit additional Occupational Therapy Assistants (OTA) on one-year temporary contracts to support improved outcomes for people being discharged from hospital on Pathways 1 and 3. Unfortunately, recruitment proved challenging due to the short-term nature of the contracts and only five additional practitioners were recruited. However, data for the 139 people on discharge Pathways 1 and 3 who received an Occupational Therapy intervention showed improved outcomes for individuals and identified financial savings for adult social care. The service will now seek to offer permanent contracts to the existing OTAs and recruit to the remaining vacancies.

2.24 Additionally, the OT service has delivered a range of performance improvement activities including the development of a performance dashboard, supported urgent response for people at risk of carer breakdown, overseen the provision of equipment through the Integrated Community Equipment Service contract and worked closely with partners in the NHS to reduce duplication and improve outcomes for Kent residents.

- 2.25 Despite challenges in recruitment and retention for fixed term contracts within the OT service, the utilisation of agency staff has supported the completion of 53 additional Care Act assessments and additional assessment for people requiring NHS Continuing Healthcare. This activity has contributed to maintaining effective hospital discharge and supported the ongoing whole-system approach to the delivery of health and social care in Kent.
- 2.26 Kent Enablement at Home (KEaH) had a successful recruitment campaign which enabled them to fill 90% of their vacant hours. Additionally, redeployment opportunities were utilised during the winter period to manage increased demand on the service. KEaH also reported to the Adult Social Care Senior Management Team on a weekly basis to feed into the situational reporting which managed pressures across the health and care system and reported on a regular basis to the Market Pressures Working Group.
- 2.27 Other activities to support hospital discharge and maintain capacity in acute settings have included extending the Hilton Discharge to Assess service to East Kent and maintaining COVID-19 designated beds until the end of March 2022.

Other activity to ensure Directorate and system resilience

- 2.28 The Innovation Delivery Team has provided a range of activities with objectives to enable workforce development and support in the provider market. A focus on communication and engagement with the care market has included the delivery of regular newsletters, locality meetings with registered managers and the delivery of the Spring Registered Management conference in April 2022.
- 2.29 Providers have been supported to focus on Quality Improvement and 18 care homes have accessed the Care Home Appointed Practitioner Programme. Training support has also been available through provider access to a funded online training portal offering over 200 courses; these have been accessed by over 1,000 users. Bitesize webinars to improve Safeguarding processes have been delivered and recordings have been made available to providers, whilst the KCC Safeguarding Lead also presented at the Autumn Registered Manager Conference attended by 200 providers. The Skills for Care Nurses Leadership Programme has supported 15 nurses in social care to develop their skillset and the second cohort began their training in April 2022.
- 2.30 Recruitment and retention in the provider market has been supported through a variety of campaigns undertaken in collaboration with health partners and the promotion of the National Department of Health and Social Care 'Made with care' campaign. Webinars on recruitment and attracting staff have also been made available to providers and KCC has worked with local schools to raise the profile of social care careers, reaching 2,000 students. Adult social care has also participated in local authority workforce groups at a national and regional level to share ideas, good practice support and a regional approach to recruitment and retention.
- 2.31 As part of the focus on workforce recruitment and retention, the Care Friends app has been implemented. The app rewards care workers if they successfully

recruit friends and family into the care workforce. Of 8,000 licences available, 7,000 have been allocated to care workers and 120 new starters are now in post.

- 2.32 Strategic discussions are also taking place between health and social care to support a joint recruitment approach. A campaign launched in February 2022 which brings together KCC, Medway Council and the Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group (KMCCG). This work will link to the recently established Kent and Medway People Board Care Sector Steering Group, which will support data collection for Kent and Medway to provide more targeted insights about the local market.
- 2.33 Work is also taking place with Job Centre Plus to target vacancies in social care. Career advisors have received information sessions to help them better understand vacancies and roles within the social care sector and promote care career paths.
- 2.34 Acknowledging the extreme pressures and challenges that the health and social care workforce have experienced in the last two years, health and wellbeing offers have also been made available to the care sector. This has included the promotion of the Kent and Medway NHS Wellbeing Hub and an ongoing offer of resilience, de-compression and managing stress webinars. A counselling offer has also been developed for people in need of more intensive support.
- 2.35 Work has also been undertaken to support care homes in developing their digital maturity. This has focused particularly on virtual monitoring to reduce people needing to enter care homes and reduce workforce pressures. The work has delivered 381 training sessions to care homes, 235 sessions of support for the data protection toolkit, identified a cohort of 12 digital remote monitoring early adaptor sites and developed a digital maturity dashboard to track progress and identify where additional support is required.
- 2.36 Funding has been accessed from the government Covid Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) to help care homes address Wi-Fi issues, and extensive market engagement has been undertaken to understand potential Technology Enabled Care solutions. A full evaluation of the Digital Care Homes project has been completed and informed a blueprint for future development.

3. Commissioned services

- 3.1 Commissioned services in Kent have experienced periods of extreme pressure due to the challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and associated challenges in recruiting and retaining workforce. The Adult Social Care Pressures Plan 2021-2022 identified plans to support providers in delivering against three key themes: keep people safe and well at home; support safe and timely discharge from hospital; help people to recover and thrive in their own home.
- 3.2 Activities and services were delivered and aligned to each of these objectives and included wellbeing offers to support independent living, support for carers,

managing appropriate hospital discharge services, delivery of effective reablement, access to community-based activities and development of long-term strategies to support market sustainability, including partnership working and the micro provider strategy.

- 3.3 Additionally, the System-Wide Market Pressures Action Plan was developed by Strategic Commissioning, adult social care stakeholders and health partners to support the provider market and enable flow through health and social care services. Throughout the winter period, the Market Pressures Working Group and Adult Social Care Senior Management Team meeting have reviewed weekly reports highlighting pressures in care homes and community-based care services. This has enabled these groups to understand pressures at a county level and quickly implement actions relating to quality, market sustainability and capacity.
- 3.4 Dashboards and analytic insights have been developed for community-based services including KEaH, Homecare, Supporting Independence Services and Hilton Discharge to Assess services. These have enabled adult social care and its partners to closely monitor demand and capacity across a number of interdependent services and assess where pressures are particularly acute against a pre-COVID-19 baseline. They have also provided insights about staffing, waiting lists for services, overstayers in services and overall market stability.
- 3.5 Despite the improved access to insights and oversight of market pressures throughout 2021, waiting lists for services increased steadily. For Care and Support in the Home services, waiting lists have increased from a weekly average of 46 in early 2021 to a weekly average of approximately 400 from December 2021 – March 2022.
- 3.6 Demand for services has been compounded by an increased number of providers handing back care packages which then have to be re-purchased with another provider and increases in hospital discharges during the winter period. Providers are also continuing to experience high levels of staff sickness associated to the high case rates of COVID-19; staff absence rates almost doubled between mid-March to end of March 2022.
- 3.7 The Adult Social Care Senior Management Team is now managing oversight and actions relating to market pressures and will seek to mitigate the current market pressures through the delivery of projects including Technology Enabled Care, managing timely reviews in adult social care services and ongoing market sustainability activities. However, there remains a high level of pressure on commissioned services and it is likely that providers will face new challenges associated to the impact of the cost-of-living increases.

Financial Implications

- 3.1 The KCC expenditure on the Adult Social Care and Health Winter Pressure Plan 2021-2022 has been minimised by reclaiming against NHS funds provided to support discharges where possible.
- 3.2 The below tables show the spend on commissioned services and staffing costs and their funding sources. Table 1.0 reports against forecast spend as actual spend figures are not yet available for these schemes. Table 2.0 provides an overview of the funds distributed to providers to support Infection Control, Rapid Testing and Workforce Capacity.

Scheme	Funding Source	Original	Revised	Forecast
Hilton Additional Winter Schemes	NHS Discharge	778,000	778,000	154,200
Discharge & Flow Co-ordinators - Staffing	NHS Discharge	887,500	887,500	303,900
KEAH Support	NHS Discharge	500,000	500,000	295,000
Hilton 2021-22 Additional Schemes	NHS Discharge	1,040,000	1,040,000	1,040,000
Broadmeadow Designated Beds	NHS Discharge		158,800	
Hawkinge Designated Beds	NHS Discharge			153,000
	Total	3,366,700	3,525,500	1,946,100

Table 1.0

Grant Name	Start Date	End Date	Total Funding
Infection Control and Testing Fund	01/04/2021	30/06/2021	10,319,396
Infection Control and Testing Fund 2	01/07/2021	30/09/2021	7,723,186
Infection Control and Testing Fund 3	01/10/2021	31/03/2022	11,869,535
Workforce Recruitment & Retention Fund	21/10/2021	31/03/2022	4,173,835
Workforce Recruitment & Retention Fund 2	10/12/2021	31/03/2022	7,705,542

Table 2.0

- 3.3 Some of the winter schemes above have been extended into the 2022-2023 financial year with agreement from the KMCCG. These are currently under negotiation with the KMCCG.

4. Other corporate implications

- 4.1 In delivering the Adult Social Care Pressure Plan 2021-2022, lessons have been learned about workforce recruitment and retention, partnership working and managing market pressures. Lessons learned will be owned by the relevant plan owners and will be shared corporately where appropriate.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 In reviewing the Adult Social Care Pressures Plan 2021-2022 and the way in which it has built on its predecessor for 2020-2021, we conclude that there is clear value in drawing together a single-source view of service pressures and

mitigating actions. The Adult Social Care Pressures plan expanded on the previous Adult Social Care Winter Plan in recognition of the compounded pressures experienced due to COVID-19, workforce recruitment and retention and the challenging budgetary position for social care services nationally.

5.2 Managing the interdependencies across these factors is crucial and it is key that Adult Social Care continues to prioritise and build on the improved working relationships with system-wide and provider partners. In line with previous years, lessons learned from the Adult Social Care Pressures Plan will be reviewed and incorporated within future planning for pressures management.

7. Recommendations

<p>7.1 Recommendation(s): The Cabinet Committee is asked to NOTE and CONSIDER the content of the report.</p>

12. Background Documents

- Adult Social Care Pressures Plan 2021-22

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