

From: Dan Watkins, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health
Richard Smith, Corporate Director Adult Social Care and Health

To: Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee – 23 November 2023

Subject: **ADULT SOCIAL CARE PRESSURES PLAN 2023-2024 - INCLUDING URGENT AND EMERGENCY CARE GRANT FUNDING**

Decision Number: 23/00098

Classification: Unrestricted

Previous Pathway of Paper: Not applicable

Future Pathway of Paper: Cabinet Member decision

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 and flu, 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 2023-2024 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.

Kent County Council has also submitted a proposal to the Department of Health and Social Care to access £2.89m of the Locality Grant for Urgent and Emergency Care to strengthen the resilience of urgent and emergency care services this winter. This report seeks endorsement by the Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee to accept this funding.

Recommendations: The Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee is asked to **NOTE** the content of the report and the Adult Social Care Pressures Plan 2023 2024 and to **CONSIDER** and **ENDORSE** or make **RECOMMENDATIONS** to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health on the proposed decision attached as Appendix 1 to:

- a) **ACCEPT** the Urgent and Emergency Care Funding under the terms set out by the Department of Health and Social Care; and
- b) **DELEGATE** authority to the Corporate Director Adult Social Care and Health to develop plans and deploy the grant funding and take relevant actions, including but not limited to entering into and finalising the terms of relevant contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) Directorate has continued to operate in an extremely challenging environment throughout 2023, as it manages pressures associated with COVID-19 recovery, impacts of local authority budget pressures, cost of living impacts, increased demographic pressures of an ageing population and people living longer with more complex needs, alongside continued high workforce vacancy rates and turnover across the health and social care sector. Many of these are the same pressures faced by most other local authorities nationally, as a result of national rather than local factors.
- 1.2 The Adult Social Care Pressures Plan 2023-2024, attached as Appendix A, identifies the factors which are likely to impact the operating environment in the coming months and beyond, and the strategic and operational actions which are being taken to ensure directorate resilience.
- 1.3 The plan will be maintained as a live document which will enable adult social care 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 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 2023/2024 adult social care is having to manage and navigate an unprecedented range of pressures across social care and health whilst continuing to operate in the context of high demand for services, budget pressures, market pressures and workforce issues both within our own social care workforce but also the wider care workforce across Kent.
- 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 ageing population and people living longer with more complex needs. Spend on adult social care increased during the COVID-19 Pandemic and these costs have remained high as providers try to secure a stable workforce and manage the increased costs associated with the cost-of-living crisis.
- 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 for 2022-2023 indicated a vacancy rate of 152,000 jobs in adult social care services nationally, which represents approximately 9.9% of the total of adult social care. Turnover rates across the sector also remain high, at 28.3% with employers reporting that retention is now more difficult than before the pandemic.

- 2.4 The People at the Heart of Care, Adult Social Care Reform White Paper', published by the government in December 2021 acknowledged the historic challenges relating to social care funding pressures and sought to address some of the current disparity between funding for the NHS and social care. The white paper sets out the 10-year government vision for transforming adult social care within England. The three core objectives are that people have choice, control, and support to live independent lives; people can access outstanding quality and tailored care and support and people find adult social care fair and accessible.
- 2.5 In its Adult Social Care Committee report, A "gloriously ordinary life" spotlight on adult social care, The House of Lords stated that the Committee recognised that the Government had outlined a new vision for social care in its 'The People at the Heart of Care', Adult Social Care Reform White Paper and it applauded its ambition, however, that it falls short of providing a concrete and fully resourced programme of change, which is necessary to realise these ambitions. Many have made the case that so far, the funding announcements made since the publication of the White Paper have reduced expectations that the full ambitions of White Paper will be realised.
- 2.6 The County Councils Network (CNN) says health and social care services face a perfect storm of post-pandemic demand for care services, including requests for short-term care packages and community care, providers closing down, and wider pressure on the NHS.
- 2.7 In addition to financial and workforce pressures, there are concerns about the possibility of a higher than usual number of infections with seasonal flu (influenza) and the much talked about tripledemic of COVID-19, Flu and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) and the impact this will have on health and social care services when combined with normal seasonal illnesses. 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.
- 2.8 The totality of the challenges outlined above mean that adult social care 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 2023-2024

- 3.1 The Adult Social Care Pressures Plan 2023-2024 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.

- As part of our continuing improvement cycle, lessons learnt from previous incident and exercises have been included in our ongoing programme of work, both to inform our review of identified risks, and to strengthen the tools and mechanisms we already have in place.
- During Summer 2023 we have exercised Adult Social Care Service Business Continuity Plans against specific scenarios, including a no-notice power outage and loss of access to fuel. The outcomes have provided assurance of our resilience arrangements, identified further learning to be embedded, and allowed our services to practice response arrangements in a safe environment.
- Live incidents in 2023 have included multi-agency responses to heatwaves, water outages and nursing home evacuations. All responses have been successfully completed and any subsequent learning documented to ensure improved resilience for future responses
- Areas of risk for winter 2023/2024 and beyond have been identified and assessed to ensure appropriate controls and actions are in place, including loss of access to fuel, power outages, loss of access to key ICT systems. All service level Business Continuity Plans across operational services have been stress tested, Service Managers and their deputies have been exercised to ensure all key staff are aware of their responsibilities and are familiar with the tools and resources available to them.

3.3 The plans will be maintained as live documents throughout Winter 2023-2024 and the ASCH Senior Management Team will maintain oversight of their implementation and will escalate any concerns to the Corporate Director Adult Social Care and Health.

3.4 Adult social care is continuing to work in collaboration with system partners in developing Hospital Discharge pathways and integrated community support services that provide better outcomes for individuals and are more sustainable for the health and care system. Across Kent there is an established Discharge to Assess approach to support people back to their own home as quickly as possible and assess their ongoing needs in their home environment. In 2022-2023 we developed a model for integrated Transfer of Care Hubs in East Kent which have demonstrated that a true multi-disciplinary approach to discharge planning supports people to go to the right destination on discharge with the right care and support. It is a priority for 2023-2024 to further develop the Transfer of Care Hub model and roll out across North and West Kent.

3.5 Discharges from Mental Health Hospitals continue to be an area with ever increasing pressure. The increase in the level of complexity presenting in mental health services means that there continues to be pressures on acute mental health beds in Kent. Adult Social Care continues to work closely with Kent and Medway Social Care Partnership Trust (KMPT) in a collaborative approach to assessments and discharge planning.

- 3.6 Adult social care is remodelling the Area Referral Service, which acts as the first point of contact in the department. This is being co-produced, working with people who draw on care and support, communities and partner agencies to design and inform the service delivery. The Area Referral Service will have a preventative focus with approaches to prevent, reduce or delay the need for social care.
- 3.7 The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) invited Kent County Council to submit proposals to access £2.89m of the Locality Authority Grant for Urgent and Emergency Care to strengthen the resilience of urgent and emergency care services this winter. The intention of the grant is to provide targeted funding for local authorities in areas with the greatest urgency and emergency care challenges. The full terms are set out in the Adult Social Care Pressures Plan 2023-2024.
- 3.8 The funding will be targeted in areas of Kent with the most challenged performance (East Kent) of urgent and emergency care services and to address capacity gaps across the county. This will include increasing capacity in the Home First Offer and in step-down provision to enable further recovery, reablement and assessment outside of acute hospital environments and support admission avoidance; increasing capacity in the Rapid Transfers Dementia Service to support people with dementia to remain in their usual place of residence; additional social care staffing to support assessment services, Integrated Transfer of Care Hubs and brokerage; and expansion of Hospital Technology Facilitators and devices, and expansion of the voluntary and community services that are commissioned to support people on discharge from hospital. Further details are set out in the Adult Social Care Pressures Plan 2023-2024.
- 3.9 Adult social care, in agreement with the Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board, has submitted a proposal to support the resilience of urgent and emergency care services across Kent. The funding will be targeted in areas of Kent with the most challenged performance (East Kent) of urgent and emergency care services and to address capacity gaps across the county.
- 3.10 The Operational Capacity Management Plan for Winter 2023-2024 identifies the recruitment activities, extended working arrangements and staff redeployment contingency arrangements that will be implemented for adult social care 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.
- 3.11 The plans for Adult Social Care's Commissioned Services encompasses 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 Activities include a broad range

of actions to reduce overall pressure on the market and system. The actions support demand management through utilising equipment and technology to manage lower-level needs and support a preventative approach.

- 3.12 The Adult Social Care Innovation Delivery Team has supported with the implementation of several new services to increase capacity in the system. These include the Digital Front Door and Digital Self-Assessment, Technology Enhanced Lives and supporting the Care Sector with a digitally enabled programme for proactive risk assessment and detection of deterioration of people in care homes.

4. Financial implications

- 4.1 KCC is seeing significant financial pressure in 2023-2024, as it did in 2022-2023. The most significant element of this pressure relates to the costs for older people in both long term residential and nursing care. There are also significant pressures in relation to supported living for younger adults with learning disability, mental health and physical needs. These financial pressures relate to increases in the numbers of people requiring support, the increased needs of individuals, along with the costs being higher for those new people requiring services.
- 4.2 This interdependency between health and social care remains important as a whole-system approach to the commissioning and funding of discharge services across the system is required. The System Discharge Pathways Programme will continue to work collaboratively with Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board (KMICB) to ensure best value for money and use of resources across the system.
- 4.3 The indicative allocation of the Urgent Emergency Care Support Fund for Kent County Council (KCC) is £2,892,188. This allocation has been calculated based on a share of the indicative £40 million funding that is proportional to KCC's adult social care relative needs formula share. The DHSC UEC Support Fund guidance and KCC's application are attached as Appendices B and C respectively.

5. Equalities implications

- 5.1 An equality impact assessment has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix D.

6. Legal implications

- 6.1 A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will be put in place for each local authority, setting out how the Urgent and Emergency Care Funding will be used and what information the local authority will be expected to provide to demonstrate impact and value for money. Local authorities will be asked to report on any discharge capacity they buy with this funding within their monthly Discharge Fund capacity returns. Local authorities will also be expected to

provide an interim report (in January 2024) to report on progress against planned spend and a final report in May 2024.

7. Other Corporate implications

- 7.1 The delivery of the Adult Social Care Pressures Plan 2023-2024 builds on the 'Adult Social Care Pressures Plan 2022-2023' 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 2023-2024 will be owned by the owners of the component plans and will be shared corporately where appropriate.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 Adult social care faces considerable challenges in the coming months 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.
- 8.2 The Urgent and Emergency Care Support funding will be targeted in areas of Kent with the most challenged performance (East Kent) of urgent and emergency care services and to address capacity gaps across the county.

9. Recommendations

9.1 Recommendation(s): The Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee is asked to **NOTE** the content of the report and the Adult Social Care Pressures Plan 2023-2024 and to **CONSIDER** and **ENDORSE** or make **RECOMMENDATIONS** to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health on the proposed decision attached as Appendix 1 to:

a) **ACCEPT** the Urgent and Emergency Care Funding under the terms set out by the Department of Health and Social Care; and

b) **DELEGATE** authority to the Corporate Director Adult Social Care and Health to develop plans to deploy the grant funding and take relevant actions, including but not limited to entering into and finalising the terms of relevant contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision.

10. Background Documents

None

11. Report Authors

Sydney Hill
Assistant Director, North Kent
03000 422239
Sydney.hill@kent.gov.uk

Laura Prentice
Acting Directorate Business Manager, Adult Social Care and Health
03000 417473
Laura.Prentice@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director

Jim Beale
Director East Kent, Adult Social Care and Health
03000 412369
Jim.beale@kent.gov.uk