

Adult Social Care & Health

Adult Social Care Pressures Plan 2023-24

Author: Jim Beale

Owner: Richard Smith

Version No: 6.0

Purpose:

The Adult Social Care Pressures Plan describes the actions on all the key activities in place, as the directorate prepares for anticipated levels of increased pressure in coming months.

VERSION HISTORY

Version	Date Issued	Brief Summary of Change	Owner's Name
Draft 1.0	26.09.23	First draft – incorporating key updates and gaps	Jade Caccavone
Draft 2.0	28.09.23	Second Draft – Business Resilience updates added and Innovation Team developments	Jade Caccavone
Draft 3.0	04.10.23	Third Draft – Updates from Policy and IDT added	Laura Prentice
Draft 4.0	11.10.23	Fourth Draft – Updates from PH, Strategic Commissioning and ARS	Laura Prentice
Draft 5.0	13.10.23	Market pressures updated Cost of living updated Conclusion and context updated Hospital discharge updated	Sydney Hill Jim Beale Laura Prentice
Draft 6.0	23.10.23	Amendments made following DMT	Sydney Hill

Version	Date Issued	Brief Summary of Change	Owner's Name
		recommendations	

Contents

- 1 Introduction and Context 4
- 2 Resilience and Emergency Planning 10
- 3 Hospital Discharge and Community Support..... 12
- 4 Operational Capacity Management Plan for Winter 2023-24 15
- 5 Commissioned Services 17
- 6 Financial Implications 22
- 7 Risk Management 22
- 8 Conclusion..... 23
- 9 Appendices..... 25

1 Introduction and Context

Current Context

Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) in Kent is having to manage and navigate an unprecedented range of pressures across social care and health in 2023/2024 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. Therefore, it is absolutely essential to have in place robust contingency planning that documents these issues, risks and pressures and evidences how ASCH, and where applicable partners, can mitigate these to support ASCH to ensure high quality and safe services to the people we support, but to also be clear where the risks are to ASCH being able to do this.

From a Public Health perspective both vaccination and natural infection with COVID has produced widespread immunity among care home residents protecting care homes from significant outbreaks. However, the immunity wanes with time and the immunity decreases much faster in the elderly who are the majority of the care home residents. We have also had other outbreaks of infectious diseases including Noro virus so there continues to be a need to carefully monitor and take mitigating action where required. However, this is hampered by the lack of national reporting in this area post pandemic.

Local Authorities nationally have seen increased budget pressures in recent years, and Kent ASCH has been particularly affected by a range of factors that have put significant pressure on its budget. Kent is having to work in the context of increased demographic pressures, with an ageing population and people living longer with more complicated needs coupled with a provider market that is not stable at present and is putting significant cost pressures on the ASCH budget. Spend on Adult Social Care increased during the 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. Coupled with this are the increased levels of demand and complexity of need.

Adult Social Care now faces a significant budgetary challenge for 2023/24, as does the wider Council, and this will continue into 2024/25 whilst simultaneously having to manage increased demand and residents having to wait longer for assessments and services due to the workforce pressures which are being seen across multiple sectors but are particularly acute in health and social care.

Following the pandemic, we have now returned to 'normal', however, the health and social care workforce and system remains under significant strain nationally, with demand outstripping capacity. The NHS continues to have significant backlogs of people waiting for elective surgeries and treatment and there are large vacancy rates in both workforce populations. The Skills for Care 2022-23 State of Care report shows some 'green shoots' with the vacancy rate having fallen from 10.6 to 9.9% in the year to March 2023. However, the workforce challenges have not gone away and there are still estimated to be around 152,000 vacant posts in Adult Social Care nationally with the turnover rate remaining high at 28.3%. NHS Digital statistics also showed that as of

June 2023 the NHS in England has a vacancy rate of 8.9% which is a slight decrease from 9.7% in June 2022.

Given the continued vacancy rates and difficulties in recruitment across the social care sector, there is inevitably concern about the impact on service delivery and provision of care this winter. ASCH has seen some positive improvements in relation to workforce challenges in the care and support in the home market with the pressure in terms of people waiting for care and support in the home having eased since the beginning of the year with the number of people waiting for a homecare package at the beginning of September remaining below the weekly average for the year. When compared to the same period last year there has been 66% decrease in the number of people waiting for care and support in the home, with a 75% decrease in the number of people waiting for more than 15 days. The number of people waiting for care and support in the home still remains relatively high compared to 2020-2021 averages. The pressures remain largest in East Kent (particularly in Thanet) with 76% people waiting for care and in support in the home living in East Kent and 45% people living in Thanet.

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.

Even so, significant and persistent challenges prevail which have received attention from notable bodies including the House of Lords. In its Adult Social Care Committee report, A "gloriously ordinary life" spotlight on adult social care, it was stated that the Committee recognised that the Government had outlined a new vision for social care in its recent 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.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had the effect of accentuating these challenges. The extent of the challenges is laid bare by the Association of Director of Adult Social Service's (ADASS) 'Time to Act Report' a roadmap for reforming care and support in England, noted that the government funding for local authorities fell by 55 percent between 2010/11 and 2019/20. Workforce challenges characterised by high vacancy rates among care providers have risen sharply and there are now estimated to be 152,000 vacancies in 2022/23 with a turnover rate higher than in the wider economy.

More people are requesting support and on current trends requests for care are expected to exceed two million in 2022/23. The impacts on people who have cause to draw on care and support are very real with too much unmet, under met and wrongly

met need. The quality and consistency of services also remain a pressing issue that is compounded by local authorities having to deal with an increased number of people with complex needs that require support, creating high levels of unmet need.

The increasing pressure on unpaid carers is also recognised including financial, emotional and the physical breaking down of support. It is estimated that there are between 4.2 million and 6.5 million unpaid carers in the UK, with the actual figure likely to be much higher. The average person now has a 50% chance of becoming an unpaid carer by the time they reach 50. Some calculations indicate that unpaid care may have a value of up to £132 billion per year, a figure which is equivalent if not greater than the annual NHS England budget.

The latest insights from the Office of National Statistics show that the cost of living has continued to rise in the UK in response to amongst other things the conflict in the Ukraine and recovery from Covid-19. The cost-of-living crisis presents a significant challenge to the country and its economy with rising energy costs, increases in food, transport and day to day prices rising significantly. These increased living costs will be 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.

The results of the ADASS Spring Survey 2023 showed that according to Directors across Adult Social Care, rising overheads such as rents, food and electricity, workforce challenges and a lack of care providers in the market continue to be the key factors driving the increasing cost of care.

Whilst acknowledging that the primary responsibility for easing the cost-of-living crisis at the population level sits with Government, Adult Social Care will continue to support and work with the support programmes that Kent County Council (KCC) has in place, these include the financial hardship programme, use of KCC's community services and working with our statutory and voluntary partners in a joined up way to ensure that we are helping vulnerable residents in Kent with financial hardship and cost-of-living issues.

Winter 2023-2024 Challenges

This winter there are concerns regarding respiratory illnesses especially in the care home settings residents including COVID-19, influenza, and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV). A new variant BA.2.86 emerged in August 2023 which caused an outbreak in a Norfolk care home with an unusually high attack rate. In light of this variant the autumn COVID vaccination programme started early and is currently ongoing. The adult covid and flu vaccination programmes had been due to start in October to maximise protection over the winter months, but now those most at risk including adult care home residents, vaccination started on 11th September. The NHS has been asked to bring the programme forward and will be working quickly to ensure as many eligible people as possible are vaccinated by the end of October.

Residents of older adult care homes and those most at risk including those who are immunosuppressed will receive their covid vaccine first. This is due to their age and multiple health conditions care home residents were the first to be offered the vaccine. ASCH is working with NHS partners to ensure high coverage of COVID-19 vaccination. As the pandemic has subsided and with reasonable immunity in the population, the eligibility criteria for both COVID-19 and flu have changed. The main change this year is that only those aged 65 and over are offered the vaccines. Most of the other criteria remain unchanged from last year.

There has been gradual reduction in those testing positive and hospital admissions due to COVID-19. Cases have declined from the peak of 8000 per day in October 2022 to around 200 in July 2023. This has risen in recent months with over 2000 cases per day in September 2023. Similarly, hospital admissions have declined from 8000 per week in October 2022 to 3000 in September 2023. Hospital admissions and deaths currently remain far below the levels of previous waves of the pandemic.

As of Friday, 29 September 2023 a total of 2,357,222 COVID-19 and 3,762,591 flu vaccinations have been administered by NHS in England since the start of the autumn campaign on 11 September 2023. More than 6,000 care homes across the country have been visited to date, representing over a third of all care homes.

However, we continue to prepare for the possibility of a higher than usual number of infections with seasonal flu (influenza) that are expected this winter and the much talked about triplememic of COVID-19, Flu and RSV. UK Health Security Agency is promoting both flu and COVID-19 vaccination to ensure high uptake among those meeting the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation group criteria and KCC Public Health and ASCH are supporting this initiative. We will continue our efforts to ensure that that front-line health and care staff get vaccinated for both COVID-19 and flu this autumn and support staff in this.

Additionally, health and social care services are already managing large backlogs and waiting lists for care and support services. In the NHS, elective procedures are being delayed and people continue to report challenges in accessing primary care services, which historically results in increased pressure on Accident and Emergency services. Industrial action in the NHS by junior doctors and consultants is further adding pressure on the NHS waiting lists.

Overall, as it happens in most winters, there is a high level of concern about the levels of pressure on health and care services this winter. Respiratory infection rates are likely to create higher levels of staff absences and the effects of the cost-of-living crisis on staff recruitment and retention will also be a key factor to consider in our efforts to provide the best quality services to our population.

The following plan sets out the ASCH Directorate's own escalation plans and contingency actions, to ensure that high-quality, safe and timely support is provided to everyone who needs it, whilst maintaining systems that can react quickly to a range of variables and rapidly changing circumstances. Adult social care will need to draw on

lessons from 2022-2023 maintain an agile and responsive approach and continue to work collaboratively with health partners to make best use of resources across the system.

The purpose of the 'Adult Social Care Pressures Plan 2023-2024' is to provide a clear and concise summary of all the key activities in place, as the directorate prepares to manage ongoing pressure on health and social care services. The main elements of the plan have been outlined in the table below. This plan will be kept under review during the coming months and updated as appropriate as arrangements are continually reviewed in response to changing circumstances. In line with the review of the Pressures Plan 2022-2023 the effectiveness of this plan will be reviewed to ensure that lessons learned are built into future plans.

Section	Activity Title	Description	Activity Lead(s)
2	Resilience and Emergency Planning, including the Operational Pressures Escalation Plan	The Emergency Resilience and Planning section outlines the tools and plans in place to respond to incidents or surges in demand across the Kent and Medway Health and Social Care System.	John Callaghan Paul Bufford
3	Hospital Discharge and Community Support	This programme of work seeks to work collaboratively with health partners to jointly commission services, promote a whole-system approach to decision-making and improve value for money for Kent residents, underpinning Government hospital discharge policies.	Sydney Hill
4	Operational Capacity Management Plan for Winter 2022-2023	The Operational Capacity Management Plan for winter aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the likely operational impact of additional demand and setting out plans for additional staffing to manage the likely demand. Identify the financial resources required to fund additional capacity and operational costs and how this will be funded. 	Service Managers
5	Commissioned Services	This section lays out the Strategic Commissioning activities which have been identified to support and build the resilience of the adult social care provider market, including the System-Wide Market Pressures Action Plan.	Simon Mitchell
6	Financial Implications	This section lays out the funding streams which have been made available to KCC to support the Winter Plan and resilience activities.	James Mackintosh
7	Risk Management	This section identifies the risk management protocols that are in place, how they will be kept under review during the winter period and the risk owners.	ASC Directorate Management Team

Table 1: ASC Pressures Plan 2022/2023

2 Resilience and Emergency Planning

The ASCH Directorate Resilience Group maintains oversight of the business continuity, emergency planning, and related resilience workstreams on behalf of the Directorate Management Team. The group provides a forum for the two-way flow of information between all Adult Social Care and Health operational teams, services, and business partners, under the chairmanship of Jim Beale, Director of Adult Social Care. The following schemes and initiatives have been brought forward this year to enhance resilience:

Table 2: Resilience and Emergency Planning arrangements

Deliverable	Objective	Timeline
Service Business Continuity Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to ensure resilience plans align to locality / community operating model across operational teams from April 2023 	Completed April 23
Service power outage exercise programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to test the operational response to no-notice power outages at in-house residential services to embed lessons learned from multi-agency exercise Lemur (November 2022) and exercise Mighty Oak (March 2023). to highlight areas for improvement to be included in KCC Power Outage Response Plan under development 	Completed August 23
Adverse Weather Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to ensure KCC Adult Social Care and Health Directorate can respond appropriately to periods of adverse / severe weather. to align guidance to national severe weather framework published by UKHSA in 2023 	Completed Sept 23
Operational Pressures Escalation Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to ensure KCC Adult Social Care and Health Directorate responds appropriately to surges in demand across the Kent and Medway Health and Social Care System. to align guidance to national framework published by NHS England in 2023 	Completed Sept 23

Debrief report and action plan addressing outcome of care home evacuation incident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to ensure lessons arising from the way this incident was handled are taken forward and recommendations are implemented 	Due Oct 23
Service fuel supply disruption exercise programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to test operational response to fuel supply disruption to embed lessons from previous incident in September 2021 to highlight areas for development of multi-agency policy 	Due Nov 23
Review of critical dependencies and risk assessment approach completed to inform future priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to embed the management process for scanning for developing risks and issues and maintaining oversight of the mitigations and controls for business disruption 	Due Nov 23
Review of systematic process to identify and address key themes and embed learning, notable practice and recommendations arising from incident and exercise debriefing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to ensure lessons arising from incidents, exercising and training activity are cross-referenced to identify common themes to inform future programme development and / or address through KCC-wide and multi-agency working. 	Due Nov 23

The ASCH Directorate continues to work with internal and external providers to increase resilience. Workstreams are well established to ensure:

- The directorate's resilience priorities are agreed and monitored through annual programmes of work and through regular reporting
- Horizon scanning for threats and risk to the delivery of Adult Social Care and Health services are maintained
- The directorate's risk assessment of business disruption, controls and actions are current and holistic
- The directorate's suite of resilience plans are regularly reviewed and validated
- The directorate is engaged in training and exercising to ensure the appropriate level of preparedness is maintained
- Post-incident and exercise debrief reports are considered, and recommendations are taken forward through annual programmes of work
- The directorate is appropriately engaged in Local Health Resilience Partnership (LHRP) and the Kent Resilience Forum (KRF) and subgroups

- The directorate's priorities are adequately reflected in KCC and multi-agency programmes of work
- Information relevant to Business Continuity and Emergency Planning is collected and disseminated to ensure managers and staff across the directorate recognise and are aware of their responsibilities and are ready to deliver in response to emergencies and business interruption.

The Operational Pressures Escalation Plan ensures the ASCH Directorate responds appropriately to surges in demand across the Kent and Medway Health and Social Care System. The objectives of the Operational Pressures Escalation Plan are as follows:

- Provide information about the national operating frameworks and service requirements
- Describe the monitoring and reporting arrangements in place, to provide early warning of surge pressures
- Inform staff about the national, regional, and local processes and procedures to be used to manage a surge in demand
- Identify roles and responsibilities for services, teams, and individuals
- Describe the actions required in response to surges in demand.

The Operational Pressures Escalation Plan, which has been deployed successfully for a number of years has been updated to reflect changes to the national framework published by NHS England in 2023.

Teams also have individualised continuity plans which will be activated in the event of a serious or catastrophic incident. These act in accordance with KCC's legal duties under the 'Civil Contingencies Act 2004' and are aligned to corporate business continuity plans.

3 Hospital Discharge and Community Support

Hospital Discharge

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.

KCC and Kent Community Health Foundation Trust (KCHFT) have worked in partnership to develop and recruit joint health and social care support worker posts in East Kent and implemented a Home First model. Home First is a reablement focused

intervention to support people on discharge from hospital to recover and to regain and promote independence. This approach provides people with better outcomes and reduces the dependencies on statutory provision, releasing capacity back into the market.

People should be supported to be discharged home, or their usual place of residence, as much as possible but where people need a further period of recovery, assessment or reablement provision is available to support people to “step down” from acute hospitals into a community bedded provision. It is an ambition in Kent to ensure these services support an individual’s recovery, be strengths based and promote independence.

There is a Technology Hospital Facilitator working in each hospital across Kent. This service is funded by NHS England and is being independently evaluated. Technology Facilitators explore with health and patient, family and carers how technology can be used to enable someone to be discharged more timely from hospital. Since the project went live at the end of July, 70 people have been supported to return home more quickly by having technology as part of the support. Awareness and confidence in the role of technology is now building and referrals for this service is increasing with 15 referrals in one hospital in one day. The types of technologies being used:

- Smart Speaker – to set prompts and reminders.
- Motion Sensor Lights - To reduce the risk of the falls by automatically coming on when motion was detected.
- PIR Motion Sensor, used for a carers in once case to enable quality sleep and reduce the risk of carer burnout. The motion detector was place in the hallway and would alert the carer in the event of the person they care for getting up during the night.
- Hydration reminder cup which encourages more fluid intake by regularly prompting the person to have a drink.

Local Authority Grant for Urgent and Emergency Care

On 8 September 2023 the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) invited Kent County Council to submit proposals to access £2.89m of this fund 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 criteria for the grant are:

- Schemes demonstrate an impact on urgent and emergency care resilience and performance over the winter period, whether by helping prevent avoidable admissions or by reducing discharge delays
- Schemes are deliverable over the winter 2023/24 period
- Schemes are additional to existing LA expenditure and capacity plans and linked to NHS winter surge plans and Better Care Fund demand and capacity plans, for example by addressing gaps identified in those plans. Section 151 officers will be required to assure that funding has been used to purchase additional services and capacity in line with the MoU

The grant funding will be used to enhance existing schemes and support the resilience of urgent and emergency services across Kent this winter. 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 in the following areas:-

1. Increase the Home First offer to provide services to support reablement and recovery for people leaving hospitals and for admission avoidance. This will support acute and community hospital “flow” and improved outcomes for people.
2. Increase capacity in step-down provision for people with complex needs, including dementia, to enable further recovery, reablement and assessment period outside of acute hospital environments. This will include bed-based provision as well as more intensive homebased community provision.
3. Increase capacity in Rapid Transfers Dementia Service for East Kent to provide community support for people with dementia to support more people with dementia to return to their usual place of residence on discharge from hospital and reducing risk of people with dementia being readmitted to hospital by providing more intensive support.
4. Additional social care staffing. This will focus on a) increased assessment services to reduce waiting times for assessment, including in step down facilities to support “flow”; b) support for the development of Integrated Transfer of Care Hubs across the county and c) Increased brokerage working with the market to identify appropriate longer-term provision of care for people with complex needs including mental health, improving system flow.
5. Expand the Voluntary and Community Sector “Take Home and Settle” service to support people with lower levels of social care needs to settle back in their homes following discharge.
6. Extend acute hospital-based Technology Facilitators and technology devices that enable people to more independently manage their health and social care needs on discharge from hospital.

A Memoranda of Understanding will be put in place, setting out how 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.

The DHSC Guidance and ASCH's application to the fund can be found in Appendices C and D respectively.

Mental Health Discharge

Discharges from Mental Health hospitals continues 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. The current number of people clinically ready for discharge in the county is 44 (23 October 2023). This cohort of people have the most complex needs that cut across statutory partners. The pressure on acute beds is also exacerbated by the fact that there are limited crisis pathway preventing admission and also limited pathways post admission.

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.

Preventative approach to Community Support

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:

Prevent: primary prevention/promoting wellbeing, e.g. provide universal access to good quality information

Reduce: secondary prevention/early intervention e.g. adaptations to housing to improve accessibility to provide greater assistance, access to assistive technology

Delay: tertiary prevention/formal intervention aimed at minimising the effect of disability or deterioration for people with established or complex health conditions

4 Operational Capacity Management Plan for Winter 2023- 2024

Winter planning actions across the ASCH Directorate have been reviewed from the 2022-2023 plan and identified areas to maintain continuity of provision to meet the anticipated demands of winter 2023-2024:

County Placement Team

The County Placement Team will be resourced to deliver weekend and bank holiday working to support reduced length of stay in hospital for people medically fit for discharge.

Kent Enablement at Home

Kent Enablement at Home (KEaH) aims to ensure that people are able to remain at home with the appropriate levels of support with the emphasis on enablement and not for people to remain or move into long term placements.

In direct response to the current hospital and community team's pressures several actions are being taken:

1. East Kent KEAH teams are accepting referrals direct from the acute trusts, along with community hospitals, and as appropriate bridging people who have been waiting on a health discharge service, when they are social care support only.
2. Working with Kent Community Health (KCHFT) to develop the Home First health and social care integrated team to support pathway 1.
3. Joining Integrated Triage calls for the Area Referral Service to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to be considered for enablement at point of entry into social care. Also joining community team integrated triage calls to support to identify those who have missed this opportunity, those awaiting an assessment and those due / overdue a review.
4. Supporting with Bridging for those ending on Hilton and awaiting CSiH, to further enable the person and also reduce the current bridging costs.
5. Supporting people waiting an Occupational Therapy Assistant assessment through a trusted assessor.

All staff are being actively encouraged to take up the Flu and Covid vaccinations / boosters.

Risk assessments will continue to be completed for all staff and service users.

Where a critical major incident occurs, KEaH will activate their Business Continuity Plan.

KEAH will continue to act as 'Provider of Last Resort' supporting 'handbacks', carer breakdown and situations in crisis.

Operational Support to Hospital Discharge Pathways

The Short-Term Pathways Teams (STP) work with health to ensure people receive the right support when discharged from both acute and community hospitals.

11 Occupational Therapy Assistants (OTA) have been recruited across the county. They work alongside the OTs within the STP to support people on their discharge from hospital pathway; to reduce deconditioning, review moving and handling to reduce the level of carer support needed longer term for those in the community. Also supporting people in short term beds to improve levels of ability and enable them to return in a safe and timely way. Better outcomes for people, better outcomes for social care. The predicted cost of this additional resource is £363,000. This service continues to be developed and has proven positive outcomes for people in promoting and supporting their independence. There has also been a positive impact on the home care market by using availability in the most efficient way and freeing up capacity back into the system.

East Kent – 3.6 x Registered Practitioners/ Social Workers have been recruited via agency staffing to provide additional assessment capacity to support assessment of those discharged from hospital to short term beds. These posts are also supporting

our in house short stay beds to ensure people move through the service in a timely way with the best outcomes.

Area Referral Service

Following the transition to the Locality Operating Model in April 2023 the Area Referral Service is now locally deployed across the 4 main areas of North Kent, West Kent, Ashford and Canterbury, and Thanet South Kent Coast. Social Worker resource has been added to the teams to ensure that referrals and safeguarding concerns are actioned appropriately at contact minimising the need to transfer to other teams. Following extensive research with other local authorities, and working alongside our community team managers, our remodelling work continues as part of ASCH's continuous improvement and commitment to prevention and enablement.

The remodelling of the Area Referral service will have a preventative focus with a single overall strategy to preventing, reducing or delaying the need for social care.

Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHP)

The AMHP service utilises a range of business continuity arrangements to manage increased levels of activity.

The service has worked to ensure that staff are distributed across the range of shifts.

Occupational Therapy

Kent County Council's Occupational Therapists (OT) provide a core skillset that underpins the Adult Social Care Making a Difference Everyday approach and supports the aspiration to support people to maintain their independence and manage risk. OTs are experts in recommending just the right amount of support for people, supporting the preventative agenda, underpinning the Enablement offer and supporting discharge from hospital.

Fixed-term acting up management capacity and administration support is planned to ensure that the OT workforce (of over 100 full time equivalent staff) is deployed in the most effective way in response to current and emerging pressures.

5 Commissioned Services

Commissioners are working with Kent's social care providers to deliver actions to ensure their preparedness and resilience for the coming months. These actions are based on guidance from the Department of Health and Social Care and will ensure that providers are aware of their duties and that there is oversight of actions being delivered.

This approach is based on 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.

Activities and services will be delivered aligned to each of these objectives, as outlined below:

Keep people safe and well at home	Support safe and timely discharge from hospital	Help people to recover and thrive in their own home
<p>Preventative services are in place to promote and support physical and mental wellbeing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellbeing offer - supporting people to live independently • Support for carers – short breaks, assessment and support services • Live Well Kent – community-based mental health and wellbeing support • One You Kent – support and advice on healthy lifestyles including weight, activity, smoking cessation, NHS health checks • Postural Stability - digital and community-based service to reduce risk of falls • Develop micro providers to support admission avoidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to ward staff with discharge options • Help to settle at home • Appropriate discharge services • Supported homecare capacity – prioritising regulated provision only where needed; giving support to the market in more complex cases • Develop micro providers to reduce the pressure in homecare and deliver non-regulated support • Secure pathways for those who cannot go directly home from hospital • Complex beds ensure the right beds are available for those with more complex needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kent Enablement at Home - reablement in the community • Voluntary and community sector support – befriending, community-based activities • One You Kent - support and advice on healthy lifestyles including weight, activity, smoking cessation, NHS health checks • Develop micro providers community-based activities
<p>Clear and timely communication in place for residents, carers and professionals</p>		

System-Wide Market Pressures Action Plan

Commissioners are working with colleagues across both adult social care and health partners to identify and implement activities to support the provider market and enable flow through health and social care services.

The provider market in Kent continues to be under pressure due to the identified workforce challenges across adult social care nationally. The number of individuals waiting for support through a package of care is increasing, which is illustrative of continued workforce pressures.

Care and Support in the Home services are critical to supporting other parts of the health and social care system and can enable flow from short-term discharge and enablement services. The significant level of pressure that the market is still under is indicative of the severity of the causes.

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. Commissioners are working with the providers for the Integrated Community Equipment Services (ICES) to improve equipment recycling and ensure that equipment, once used, can quickly be re-integrated within the supply chain to support admission avoidance and enable hospital discharge.

The plan also includes a number of actions to increase capacity in services:

- Discharge services will continue to deliver additional capacity in acute trusts in both the East and West of the county
- Settle at Home services provided by the Red Cross will continue to provide discharge support
- New routes for increasing discharge capacity for mental health services with Kent and Medway Partnership Trust (KMPT) are being explored
- KEaH will recruit additional staff to support hospital discharge and system flow
- Further development of the use of 'micro providers' to deliver non-regulated activities will support admission avoidance, free up capacity in Care and Support in the Home services to address the waiting list for this service and support flow in the discharge process.

There is also a focus on delivering activities which will support recruitment and retention within the care sector workforce:

- The Care Friends app rewards care workers if they successfully recruit friends and family into the workforce
- Strategic conversations are taking place between health and social care to support a joint recruitment approach in relation to overseas recruitment
- Mental health and wellbeing offers are being developed to provide support to care workers
- A Kent and Medway People Board Care Sector Steering group has been established
- Work is taking place with Job Centre Plus to target vacancies in social care with care specific job fairs

- Specialist training in Deaf Awareness to develop existing workers
- Promotion of Care Jobs in Kent via [Kent Care Professional](#)
- Ongoing Nursing Associate Program within the care sector
- Specialist training for workplaces to have a worker undertake First Aid Mental Health training to support colleagues
- Recruitment Initiative with the Prince's trust in East Kent to bring young people into the care sector.
- Joint south east project with NHS and national Volunteer service to offer volunteers work experience, training and a guaranteed interview for a health and care role.
- Flexi working and De-biasing recruitment webinars to inform managers on more inclusive recruitment practices and consideration of flexi work options to attract more applicants
- 25 School and college engagement events to promote care as a carer and encourage more younger people to think about working in the sector
- Promotion of Department of Health and Social Care job site availability for providers to advertise their vacancies free of charge.

Through the emerging place-based approach, Commissioners will improve collaboration with health and providers to support the market. Local intelligence will support and enable an approach that is responsive to the needs of different localities.

Locality Commissioners continue to work in partnership with Health and Social Care colleagues to provide support to providers who receive a Care Quality Commission (CQC) rating of 'Requires improvement' or 'Inadequate'. This will provide assurance that providers are rapidly taking the appropriate steps to remedy their issues and improve quality without reducing capacity in the provider market.

Commissioners will work with Public Health and corporate communications teams to manage public messaging and manage reporting into other governance forums. Messaging will focus on what people can do to support their family members this winter, and the need to manage resources so that resources can be targeted to best meet the needs of people requiring care and support.

Additionally, the Adult Social Care Innovation Delivery Team has led the development of the Learning and Development Hub, which supports the care sector to develop registered managers, improve quality in care, identify recruitment and retention solutions, provide training opportunities, and seek out innovation. This activity ensures the social care market is of quality, sustainable and adaptive enough to change, as required by the Care Act 2014. Activities delivered to date have focused on:

- Communication and engagement with the wider care market to share national updates, local support available to the wider care market, financial support and other initiatives available for care workers etc)
- Improving leadership and management
- Quality Improvement
- Training support
- Development of SC Nursing Provision
- Health and wellbeing support offer for the care sector

- Recruitment and retention support
- Promoting care careers & school engagement
- Improving safeguarding
- Encouraging the use of digital technologies
- Collaborative working to support nurses within social care and scoping work on overseas recruitment
- Encourage providers to set up their Skills for Care Adult Social Care Data-set (ASC-ds) as this provides workforce data for the care sector to aid forward planning. Currently 53% of providers have an ASC-ds.
- Local Skills Improvement Plan – joint working group with 3 Kent colleges and Chamber of Commerce developing FE curriculum around digital skill requirements for the care sector

The Adult Social Care Innovation Delivery Team have also supported with the implementation of a number of new services to increase capacity in the system. These include:

1. Digital Front Door and Digital Self-Assessment

Working with people who draw on care and support and partners we have co-developed an information, advice and guidance platform and a range of digital self help tools. This will help with prevent, reduce and delay by improving information and connecting people with support and services.

From Autumn '23, ASC will launch an online digital self-assessment which has been tested in West Kent. This will enable people to complete an assessment in their own time and find out if they are eligible for social care support. Each individual is provided with a personalised report which connects them with support and services or if required progresses to a full assessment with social care, however this streamlines the full assessment with social care due to the information already provided.

During the autumn/early winter there will be a digital roadshow in partnership with Digital Kent across communities to raise the profile of these digital tools to communities and partners.

2. Supporting the Care Sector with Digital

Funding has been secured from NHS England to test Feebris with 30 care homes up to May '24. This is a digitally enabled programme for proactive risk assessment and detection of deterioration of people in care homes. The platform is hardware agnostic, connecting to a range of sensors, and uses AI to ensure the quality of information captured and automate the detection of risks, this empowers proactive management of risks such as falls and deterioration therefore reducing hospital admissions. At present the digital monitoring is monitoring 431 people. This is being independently evaluated to measure the impact.

Care providers are also supported to put in place Digital Social Care records with is match funded by NHS England. The aim is to improve work process for the provider by moving from paper based to digital and improving the quality of information.

There is an event early November with care providers to showcase all the digital activity in Kent and provide support with adopting the digital solutions.

3. Technology Enhanced Lives

Adult Social Care will go live with a county wide Technology Enhanced Lives service from 1 November '23. Devices such as movement sensors, smart watches, wearables, falls prevention devices and other technologies will allow people to remain independent for longer and better manage risk when previously they may have needed additional help, for example home care or moving to a care home. These Technologies are increasingly connected and integrated to each other and to dashboards to support remote monitoring. There is an opportunity to use data generated from the Technologies to enable us to move from reactive to preventative approach. There are system wide benefits, such as working with Health to reduce hospital admissions and improve hospital discharge.

6 Financial Implications

KCC is seeing significant financial pressure in 2023-24, as it did in 2022-23. 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.

Although some mitigations are in place which will alleviate some of the pressures, it is likely there will remain a financial pressure at the end of the financial year.

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.

7 Risk Management

Risk management is a key element of the council's internal control framework and the requirement to maintain risk registers ensures that potential risks that may prevent the Authority from achieving its objectives are identified and controlled. The management of risk is therefore important in underpinning service delivery planning, performance management and operating standards.

The Adult Social Care Directorate Management Team (DMT) maintain risk registers at a directorate level to oversee risks to service delivery and ensure that appropriate mitigations are put in place. Adult social care also holds a number of risks within the corporate risk register for areas under the directorate's portfolio. Risk registers are maintained centrally and reviewed regularly by DMT to ensure actions have been

implemented and monitor the outcomes. The risk registers are maintained as live documents and updated with newly identified risks and mitigating actions. DMT will retain responsibility for their oversight and for assuring that actions have been implemented by the identified risk owners.

The risks currently overseen relate to: budget pressures, culture growth, recruitment and retention, information asset management and information governance, and Deprivation of Liberty assessments.

8 Conclusion

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 Adult Social Care and Health has had the opportunity to learn from the extreme pressures it operated under during the last few years and has confidence in its business continuity plans and mitigations in place to manage risk, it will need to maintain an agile approach to respond to these ongoing pressures.

However, the collaborative approach Adult Social Care and Health has undertaken with its partners in both the health and the provider market since March 2021 puts us in a strong position to respond to the challenges. Partnership working across the system has already demonstrated its efficacy in ensuring that resources can be targeted to where they are most needed, and that Adult Social Care and Health is able to continue to prioritise the health and wellbeing of Kent residents.

The findings from the ADASS Spring Survey 2023 shows short-term funding boosts from Government have helped reduce the number of people waiting for care and increased support for people at home; but according to the report increases in care delivered are not keeping pace with increased needs.

Despite the progress, care waiting lists remain far too high and ADASS is warning could rise again this winter without more staff. And a record NHS backlog, rising mental health needs, support around domestic abuse of people with care and support needs, and carer breakdown means most councils are not confident they can offer the minimum social care support in their communities required by law.

A huge effort by social care teams to rebuild services after the challenges of Covid 19, has reduced national care waiting lists from a high watermark of 542,000 in April 2022 to 430,000 at the end of March 2023. But that means the health and wellbeing of many thousands of people continues to deteriorate while they wait for assessments, care or direct payments. Some will end up having to go to hospital or a care home instead, undermining their independence and costing the NHS and councils much more in the long run. We'll likely go into this winter with waiting lists still higher than in 2021 and these could rise further during the winter.

The survey shows that in the battle to free up NHS acute beds, council social care teams are needing to support more people coming out of hospital with complex health and support needs.

In order to tackle the pressures of coming months Adult Social Care will continue to deliver ongoing work with partners to manage infection control; hospital admission avoidance and discharge, use of technology and managing end of life care; utilising government funding to support recruitment and retention in the provider market; supporting and development the provider market; and continuing to engage with regional and national partners to support contingency planning and communication with providers.

9 Appendices

The following section contains all relevant appendices to the ASC Pressure Plan 2022-2023 document.

Appendix Title / Description	Embedded Document
Operational Pressures Escalation Plan	 KCC Operational Pressures Escalation
Equality Impact Assessment	 Adobe Acrobat Document
DHSC UEC Support Fund Letter	 20230908_DHSC letter_LA UEC supp
KCC UEC Proposal	 LA UEC proposal Kent County Council

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