

FULL COUNCIL

7 JULY 2020

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HEALTH

1. COUNCIL UPDATE REGARDING

1.1 Purpose of Report

To advise Members that a decision making session was held on 31st March 2020, 6th April 2020, and the 20th May 2020 covering CPH Adult Social Care & Health.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 This report highlights some of those decisions which have been made, but not all. Members wishing to view all decisions made can find these at <http://eservices.solihull.gov.uk/mgInternet/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1>

1.2.2 Attached to this report is a list of decisions made.

1.3 Decisions

1.3.1 At my decision session held on the 31st March 2020 I considered the extension of the contract for Umbrella Sexual Health Services and also approved the Solihull Community House Delivery Plan and Vision. At my decision session held on the 6th April I considered and endorsed the approach of the Care Act Easements and on the 20th May I considered in private the Allocation of the Infection Control Fund.

1.4 Good News

1.4.1 Updated Health and Well-being Strategy to reflect Covid-19 impacts

1.4.2 The Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2022 has been reviewed in light of the far-reaching impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the wellbeing, economy and functioning of communities in Solihull. The review acknowledges this shift in system priorities with a view to achieving the correct alignment of focus and resource to address health inequalities and the needs of vulnerable groups. It aims to rebuild resilience of individuals and communities, learning from the pandemic whilst identifying and understanding local needs and priorities.

1.4.3 The 4 key priorities the First 1001 Days (0-2 years), Employment, Ageing Well, and Social Connectedness are the main focus of deliverables for the strategy. It is proposed that a further priority is added on the Covid-19 pandemic itself which is listed as priority 5. The first stage of the strategy review was presented at the Health and Wellbeing Board on Tuesday 9th June 2020 and the second phase is underway, adding recommendations from Board members before further consultation. It is envisaged that the reviewed strategy will be finalised in July.

1.4.4 Covid-19

1.4.5 Managing the on-going response to Covid-19 continues to be a major priority for this portfolio. This has included on-going work to reduce the spread of Covid-19, working with BSOL CCG and Public Health England to manage outbreaks. A dedicated phone line and email single point of contact is available to provide advice and support with more specialist help available if needed.

- 1.4.6 As we move out of lock down and with the establishment of the NHS Test and Trace service, SMBC through the leadership of the Director of Public Health, will take on a greater role reducing the risk of outbreaks and containing these as quickly as possible when they happen, to keep the transmission rates (“R number”) down and reduce the risk of a second wave.
- 1.4.7 **Response to date - Outbreak prevention and management**
- 1.4.8 All residential care homes, nursing homes and learning disability & autism supported accommodation have been offered enhanced testing of all residents by a local swabbing team and given infection prevention advice when results are given over the telephone. Training in infection control has also been provided by BSOL CCG and a wide range of advice and guidance has been shared with care homes. Where care homes have had outbreaks, there has been joint support provided by Public Health England, SMBC, and BSOL CCG to help manage these.
- 1.4.9 To support the safe return of schools, all educational settings have been receiving regular advice on specific issues such as infection prevention, hand sanitiser use in schools, catering, home-school transport, PPE, testing and isolation. Since the wider reopening of schools on 1st June, the Council has supported a number of educational settings with specific public health advice (including guidance for children with complex needs, use of hydrotherapy pools and staffing of bubbles).
- 1.4.10 Bespoke advice and support has also been made available for some particularly vulnerable individuals needing to self-isolate including direct provision of nicotine replacement therapy for smokers
- 1.4.11 **Community engagement on local experiences of Covid-19**
- 1.4.12 Work is also underway to understand local people’s experiences of Covid-19 to shape our future health and well-being response. This reflects some of the key issues raised in Public Health England’s report “Disparities in the risk and outcomes from Covid-19” and will be coordinated with wider work being carried out by Birmingham and Solihull CCG.
- 1.4.13 **Test and Trace Beacon**
- 1.4.14 The Council as part of a Beacon site Solihull is working with Coventry and led by Warwickshire County Council to rapidly test, learn, and scale up localised approaches to the prevention and control of Covid-19. An allocation of just over £1m has been made in support of this accelerated testing approach and this provides a direct link to the National testing programme to share better practices and influence the shape and requirement for national testing arrangements.
- 1.4.15 Outbreak Management Control plans across the three geographies and locally will be completed by 29th June and contain an overarching plan and detailed local implementation plan. This will build on existing work to manage incidents and outbreaks locally and will see a significant scaling up of our response.
- 1.4.16 **Solihull Council Shielding Summary**
- 1.4.17 We have developed a specific database for the recording and management of the Solihull Shielding Cohort, which is currently 7,241 people, which allows us to administer the daily updates from government as well as provide a chronology of all contacts with individuals.

1.4.18 There are 1,359 people who have indicated that they are unable to get essential supplies and we have been providing fresh food parcels to supplement the government's weekly food parcels. The additional boxes contains fresh milk, bread, eggs, and 4 items of fruit and veg sourced through local small businesses. To date we have issued over 5,500 fresh food parcels. We have issued 354 emergency food parcels to support people who are waiting for their weekly food parcel to start or have experienced issues with delivery of the weekly food parcel. Where people are identified as having specific dietary requirements we have provided weekly food parcels to meet this need through our arrangements with Helping Hands who operate our foodbank.

1.4.19 We are undertaking 'safe and well calls' on a weekly basis or at a frequency that people have requested, making an average of 900 calls per day. Where we are unable to make contact we have an escalation route which involves checks of local systems and visits to properties involving support from the fire service. If this does not result in contact we escalate to the police who will undertake further intelligence checks, attend the property and if required force entry. We have pathways in place for escalation of issues with the collection or ordering of medication identified during our 'safe and well calls'.

1.4.20 A couple of comments and thank you cards received are highlighted below:



- *Thank you, you have contacted my mother who is shielding the other day and it is a comfort to all our family local and non local alike. You are doing a great job.*
- *Thank you for the phone contact – reassuring in challenging times.*
- *You have been amazing with my old Dad, 90 today. Thank you soooo much.*
- *Thank you for doing your best, and going through such lengths to ensure the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable people.*

1.4.21 Covid-19 compliments

1.4.22 We have had some very touching compliments recently about the kind and committed care which social care staff are continuing to provide. Many of these have related specifically to our management of Covid-19. Some anonymised examples are outlined below:

- *"What an amazing job you have all done during this Covid-19 period. Well done to you and all the team"*
(Equipment and Wheelchair Service).

- *“This is multi-agency work at its best and we really appreciate everyone who has gone 'above and beyond' to make it happen”*
(Planning and Commissioning Team).
- *“Just a little note to say a big thank you for your support, patience, and care. This journey has been a difficult one, but with your help it has been easier”*
(Reablement Team).

1.4.23 **Emergency Fund to Support Family Carers during Covid-19**

1.4.24 Solihull Council, in partnership with Carers Trust Solihull, set up an emergency fund to support family carers struggling during the Covid-19 crisis.

1.4.25 The fund, which is being administered by the Carers Trust Solihull, is for family carers who are at the point of crisis and need help with essentials up to £250 when no other solutions are available. The fund may also be accessed by young carers supporting family members who require items such as learning resources or access to internet-based support groups.

1.4.26 I am really pleased to report that we have been able to provide this financial support for Solihull’s family carers. We estimate that there are at least 25,000 family carers in the borough and they are facing new challenges as a result of the coronavirus outbreak. Many, including our young carers, are taking on more caring responsibilities for their relatives and friends who are older, ill, or disabled.

1.4.27 Family carers can contact the Carers Trust Solihull for advice or support and further details about the emergency fund by calling 0121 788 1143 or visiting their website www.solihullcarers.org

1.4.28 **Care Home Support Plan**

1.4.29 In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the government asked local authorities to lead on the delivery of a Care Home Support Plan to build resilience in the care home sector, reduce the risk of infection in homes, prevent new outbreaks, and support the workforce. The council’s plan was delivered swiftly to meet the deadline in order to have the most impact. The plan demonstrates how closely the Council has worked with NHS partners and care home providers throughout the pandemic, and will continue to apply the lessons learned nationally and internationally about how to minimise the risk to care home residents of a future outbreak. To support this, the Council has been distributing to care home providers the allocated Infection Control Fund for Solihull and now invites social care providers to submit proposals for the remaining funds following government guidance.

1.4.30 **Funding for the Care Sector**

1.4.31 The government announced the Infection Control Fund on the 13th May, and the first payments have now been made to eligible care homes. This has provided nearly £1m to local care homes to support them to minimise the risk of infections spreading within homes. This will support the homes to fund measures such as cohorting staff to small groups of residents, and staff being paid full wages when they are asked to self-isolate to ensure they do not feel the need to come in to work when they may have been exposed to the virus.

1.4.32 This is on top of £1.6m in support for the care sector to meet the financial challenges caused by coronavirus, including PPE costs and higher levels of staff sickness. Over £1m of this has already been paid out to the sector. The council has also invested in specific discharge beds to manage people leaving hospital with a Covid+ diagnosis.

1.4.33 **Carers Hardship Fund and Care Workers Charity Fund**

1.4.34 I'm pleased to report that we are providing some financial help for people on the frontline who are supporting our most vulnerable residents. We have set up a hardship fund for care workers in Solihull which is being administered by the Care Workers Charity. This fund is a recognition that many care workers have been hard hit financially during the coronavirus pandemic.

1.4.35 In some cases care workers have been unable to work because they are self-isolating at home. Or they might need money either to replace essential appliances like a broken washing machine to make sure they can wash work clothes or sadly to help with the funeral costs of a loved one. I'm grateful to the Care Workers' Charity for ensuring that the grants go directly to the people who need them.

1.4.36 Working with the Carers Trust Solihull we have also set up an emergency fund to support family carers who are at the point of crisis and need help with essentials. We estimate that there are at least 25,000 family carers in the borough and they are facing new challenges as a result of the coronavirus outbreak. Many, including our young carers, are taking on more caring responsibilities for their relatives and friends who are older, ill, or disabled. I know that the Carers Trust Solihull has been in touch with many carers during lockdown and I would like to thank them for the work they do to support family carers all year round.

1.4.37 Links to the latest news items if you want to add them to the report:

Fund for care workers:

<https://www.solihull.gov.uk/news/ArtMID/820/ArticleID/2956/Emergency-fund-to-support-family-carers-during-Covid-19>

1.4.38 **Fund for family carers:**

<https://www.solihull.gov.uk/news/ArtMID/820/ArticleID/2941/Solihull-Council-invites-care-workers-to-apply-for-hardship-fund>

1.4.39 **Carers Week: 8 - 14 June 2020**

1.4.40 The theme for Carers week 2020 was making caring visible. Carers' week is the opportunity to recognise and reflect on the significant contribution that carers make not only to those who they are caring for but also to the health and social care system. Carers' week gives us an opportunity to thank carers for all that they do, recognising that although caring can be very rewarding it can also be hard and that carers need to be well supported by us all. The Council commissions Carers Trust Solihull to deliver support to carers. The challenges of celebrating Carers' Week during lockdown did not phase Carers Trust staff who went all out to deliver a range of on-line and interactive sessions for carers. The week began with a musician and entertainer Chris Beebee, performing a mini gig available through Facebook. This proved to be popular with over 1,500 people listening in.

1.4.41 Katie a young adult carer and Amy a parent carer shared their stories helping to make caring more visible to those who have not yet experienced being a carer. Stories such as these really highlight the highs and lows of caring and show the importance of having people around you who really understand what it is like to be a carer and can offer support.

1.4.42 Quizzes, a virtual coffee morning, and social online chatting were popular choices for all carers, with lots of discussion amongst carers about how they were coping in lockdown, sharing tips and strategies adopted. Carers Trust Solihull intends to host a series of regular Zoom based activities, support groups, and information options for carers following the successful online experiences during Carers' week.

1.4.43 Prescription Service

1.4.44 During February and March Public Health worked closely with the BSol CCG to put in place a service to collect and deliver prescriptions for those either shielding or over the age of 75 years or deemed at risk. Gateway Family Services who provide some of our Community Well-being Services have been a key partner in this arrangement as well as our own staff and West Midlands Fire and Rescue service. Over 400 prescriptions have been delivered since the beginning of April.

1.4.45 PPE supplies and distribution

1.4.46 National shortages of PPE have been well documented and SMBC has worked with national and regional partners through the West Midlands Local Resilience Forum to get access to national emergency PPE stocks and to develop a local, quality assured PPE store. To date, over 270,000 items of stock have been issued to social care and other services needing emergency PPE. This service has been available 7 days a week and has been supported by modelling and forecasting for demand across a range of settings including residential settings, schools, vulnerable people and staff returning to work have all informed this position.

1.4.47 Bereavement:

1.4.48 A new joint Bereavement support service was set up on the 4th May across BCC/BSol CCG and SMBC to meet the anticipated requirements post Covid-19 with an all age service. There is a single point of access, triaged referrals based on postcode and choice of where to be seen. A Solihull and Birmingham offer includes online and alternative resources and a range of support options available which includes suicide bereavement. This service will continue to be evaluated and assessed for its success and continuance.

1.4.49 Activity data shows increasing numbers of people accessing the services, including those bereaved by Covid-19 being seen within the first 2 months of their bereavement. Children and young people's referrals are low, anticipated to increase once schools fully return in September and numbers of people bereaved by suicide are higher, compared to last year's figures. This includes people bereaved up to 10 years ago who are now seeking support.

1.4.50 Suicide Prevention

1.4.51 BSOL CCG, with Solihull and Birmingham Public Health Teams has secured Suicide Prevention Programme Transformation Funding, to focus on improving Primary Care Support; suicide prevention training for health and social care staff, enhancing the crisis service, a suicide prevention co-ordinator, and a new bereavement partnership across Birmingham and Solihull.

1.4.52 In May, Solihull and Birmingham Public Health Teams were invited by Public Health England to participate in a pilot of a National Real Time Suicide Surveillance system (RTSS). The development of a national RTSS will enable our public health system in England to monitor deaths by suicide in near real time and co-ordinate timely national and local suicide prevention efforts and enable and improve local responses to risks (trends, patterns, clusters, anomalies).

1.4.53 Mental Health

1.4.54 A joint mapping of mental health provision and identified arrangements to support mental health referrals and recovery is being developed across Solihull. A variety of provision is available although services need to be equipped to support the effects of Covid-19.

1.4.55 Joint work with BSol CCG and BCC and the NHS Trusts is actively influencing and implementing training and development packages (psychological first aid, bereavement, suicide prevention, making every contact count) with PHE in support of awareness training for frontline staff. The approach will ensure referrals for all mental health needs are directed to the right place for the appropriate support and treatment interventions and underpinned by effective communications

1.4.56 The objectives of the Mental Health components of the Solihull Economic Recovery Plan will feed into the offer and include; working with Solihull Community Housing to address social isolation, explore opportunities within our current Lifestyle Services commissioning arrangements, and work closely with the Primary Care Link workers. Gateway services have maintained telephone contact for people referred who are feeling isolated and lonely.

1.4.57 **Domestic Abuse**

1.4.58 Weekly monitoring shows an initial decrease reporting/disclosures of domestic abuse to services with reports to police remaining stable. Increased disclosures during May have been evident and the severity and frequency of abusive behaviour is escalating. Relevant Statutory services have remained available to those experiencing domestic abuse throughout, although some have operated remotely.

1.4.59 Messaging continues to those at risk, through a range of mechanisms and updates on domestic abuse are being shared widely across operational cells.

1.4.60 A campaign with pharmacies will encourage those at risk to seek help and advice, using stickers for sealing prescriptions. The Office of Police and Crime Commissioner is continuing #noexcuseforabuse campaign, which SMBC is supporting.

1.4.61 £60,000 has been added to the SMBC budget as a consequence of domestic abuse in support of posts to ensuring temporary accommodation and outreach responses are available. These posts prepare us for the finalisation of the DA Bill.

1.4.62 **Drugs and Alcohol – SIAS**

1.4.63 SIAS have maintained an active and extremely innovative set of service offers under Covid-19 with an everyday and all day complete schedule of virtual sessions for people to join. See timetable listed <https://www.sias-solihull.org.uk/> . Family oriented sessions have been extremely popular. This approach will be maintained for appropriate clients after Covid-19.

1.4.64 SIAS have set up a suite of virtual support groups throughout the day every day and have attracted new clients who have benefited from this approach and who would not have visited the service using the face to face visits. Over 402 people joined these sessions in just 3.5 weeks contributing to earlier intervention approaches

1.4.65 The service has also continued to maintain a rota for urgent cases at Middlewood House.

1.4.66 **SCH Updates**

1.4.67 The Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown has brought with it a number of challenges for SCH, our customers and our partners. This difficult period has also seen new opportunities arise for SCH to both support our customers and the wider communities in which we operate.

- 1.4.68 SCH has been embedded as a partner to SMBC into the emergency Covid-19 response framework and a dedicated SCH cell was established at the outset. Through this Cell, business critical services were identified and staff resources closely monitored. Swift action was taken to secure additional IT to support remote working and systems put in place to continue delivery of emergency services. Key decisions were made to pause non-critical services and services which could not be carried out safely so as to protect colleagues and customers. Working closely with HR colleagues we set up frequent communication with all staff and identified any staff who might be at particular risk of Covid-19 in line with government guidance. As the situation worsened and the eventual government lockdown introduced, all services that could be delivered with staff working from home were moved to remote working.
- 1.4.69 We established a dedicated Customer and Community Support team at SCH, to support our most vulnerable customers. This team was drawn from many areas of the business with a focus on contacting all our vulnerable customers as well as supporting customers identified through Operation Shield. The teams provided regular welfare calls to a vulnerable households and worked alongside partners as part of Operation Shielding to support the most vulnerable through the distribution of food and medical supplies.
- 1.4.70 As lockdown measures have eased, SCH has moved into recovery planning and has put in place a recovery roadmap establishing a risk assessment process to underpin services being restarted. The housing register is now operational and bidding has recommenced although special measures are in place around property viewings. Emergency and urgent repairs have continued throughout and now some routine repairs are being reactivated where safe working practices are possible and we are putting in place arrangements to address the repairs backlog which has accumulated. Our compliance and fire integrity work has continued throughout and has been subject to comprehensive risk assessment. Covid-19 has brought financial hardship to some customers and SCH has seen an increase in rent arrears as a result. However, we have put measures in place to support customers through this including additional support through our money advice service. Our home options and homeless service has remained operational throughout and has been a key priority along with our Wellbeing service through phone calls and conference calling.
- 1.4.71 With regard to our supported housing schemes such as Saxon Court and Ipswich House, detailed and focused work has been undertaken to ensure a safe environment for staff and residents. Special measures have also been put in place in our high rise flats to support people with observing of social distancing measures and continue to raise awareness to keep people safe. With regard to our offices, measures are being put in place to deliver a Covid-19 secure working environment to support any staff who do need to be office based although working from home continues to be the default position. Our focus remains on providing key services to customers, supporting colleagues and supporting SMBC teams with the wider approach for the borough.
- 1.4.72 We have successfully launched the SCH Delivery Plan 2020-21 which feeds into our five year Vision and Strategy. We felt it was important to launch the Delivery Plan and continue to move the business forward to achieve and make progress towards the commitments contained in the plan. Following on from this, we have oversight at EMT of the translation of the commitments made within the plan, into objectives for teams and individuals notwithstanding the impact of Covid-19.
- 1.4.73 We are continuing to move forward with recruitment to key posts and ensure services and teams are resourced. Consideration is being given to additional resource that may be needed to support our work during this difficult time. Communication has also been vital in keeping our colleagues and customers connected and well informed.

- We issued a Covid-19 Special Edition Newsletter to all our 10000 households
 - Have in place high profile and visible social media and digital communication
 - We coordinate key messages with SMBC for customers to ensure maximum impact and reach
 - For colleagues, regular messages are communicated via EMT in the form of email updates and video messaging
- Finally, we have over recent weeks and months been developing a suite of customer Service Standards for key areas of the business. These will set out for customers what they can expect to receive from us as a service.

1.4.74 **Special Focus on Homelessness**

1.4.75 It has been reassuring to see the co-ordinated response to delivering services and support to those individuals and households who have unfortunately faced homelessness since lockdown began in March. A Homelessness Taskforce has been set up, which includes SCH and all of the Council's specialist commissioned providers of homelessness and support service who have worked together to ensure that all statutory services continue to be provided in an accessible way to customers, that anyone who has presented as homeless in Solihull has had a guaranteed offer of accommodation and wider support to meet their needs (including hot-food to those in some hotels with no suitable cooking facilities) and that the most vulnerable customers have continued to receive regular visits and been supported to access partner services and offers from the Voluntary and Community Sector where needed.

1.4.76 It is also extremely positive that working in this way with partners the Council and SCH have managed to support over 50 individuals who have been rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping into accommodation in hotels or supported schemes during the emergency response. This enhanced offer of accommodation and support continues to be in place as lockdown measures ease and all of our partners are working hard to put in place sustainable move-on plans which will mean that no-one who has been accommodated as a response to Covid-19 should need to return to the streets. In addition I am pleased to report that Solihull has accommodated a further 3 individuals through the regional Housing First programme during the lockdown period with 20 individuals in total now receiving intensive housing related support and 9 of these now in permanent tenancies. This demonstrates well the dedication of our local service providers to supporting those most in need even during the most difficult of times.

1.4.77 Solihull's alternative giving scheme, Change into Action, has seen some hugely generous donations over recent months and in response to the additional impact of Covid-19 on homeless individuals, raising over £45,000 now since its launch last September - <https://changeintoaction.org.uk/solihull/> With recent grant funding payments approved to a number of local organisations supporting those who are homeless I hope that this additional targeted support will help some of the most vulnerable residents of Solihull to get back on their feet.

1.4.78 Finally it is good news that one of two new Council-funded specialist case worker roles to support victims of domestic abuse will be focused on supporting those who are homeless and have been placed in Temporary Accommodation. This is a service that will be absolutely essential to support those victims who have approached as homeless and received support during the lockdown but also in meeting predicted future demand.

1.5 **Future Decisions**

1.5.1 At my future decision sessions I will consider the Annual Adult Social Care Complaints & Compliments Report and the Adult Social Care Capital Programme Report.