



STOCKPORT
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Department of Health & Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU**

RE: Stockport MBC Winter Plan Assurance

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for the opportunity to report on the Winter Plan for Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council's Adult Social Care Service with particular emphasis on the Local Authorities readiness and capacity to support the wider health and social care system within the borough.

The plan has been written in conjunction with the National Adult Social Care Winter Plan and in light of the findings of the Social Care Covid-19 Taskforce findings. This plan sits alongside the System Winter Plan, which was developed along with wider Health & Care partners.

Along with many other local authorities, we have been working hard to support the wider health and social care system to continue to provide a strong continuity of care and resilience in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. To date, our system-wide partnership has risen to the challenge and has been able to meet the demands and pressures that we have seen on the entire system.

Partners across Stockport have been working on a daily basis to ensure we remain resilient and sustainable throughout the current crisis and beyond. We are confident the oversight and systems we have put in place provides partners with the ability to respond to issues and problems early and to maintain the crucial care and support being delivered.

1. Preventing and controlling the spread of infections in care settings

Stockport has well-established forums and support mechanisms to manage the risks of infections in care settings. Weekly newsletters and regular provider forums are in place to disseminate all relevant guidance, discuss, and resolve any associated challenges.

Through the Health Protection Board and Outbreak Engagement Board, we have in place the governance and support to provide the necessary support to care providers who are experiencing outbreaks. Through individual engagement, we are able to

support the containment and to help providers put measures in place to manage future outbreaks.

1.1 Managing staff movement between care settings

With respect to managing staff movements between care settings we have made prompt distribution of monies from the Infection Control Fund, and continue to submit returns on how the funding has been used in line with the grant conditions. This has supported the limiting all staff movement between settings unless necessary, to help reduce the spread of infection. This includes staff who work for one provider across several care homes, staff that work on a part-time basis for multiple employers in multiple care homes or other care settings (for example in primary or community care).

There is a well-established process for regular communication and engagement with providers. This includes individual contact, regular forums and twice-weekly communication / information emails. Staffing levels and concerns are captured as part of daily sit rep calls. Outputs considered, and any required action undertaken through Care Home Strategy and Support Group.

1.2 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

A regular updated guide is provided to all providers and teams within the council. This is reinforced with regular engagement with providers and access to PH colleagues for specialist advice and support.

Details around the PPE Portal and how to register have been shared with providers through the weekly comms on a number of occasions. However, we know that there continues to be problems with this service. Therefore, the PPE Hub will continue to provide equipment to all providers - including those eligible or ineligible for the portal, from the regional hub at the Town Hall. This will continue until March 2021 as per Greater Manchester (GM) guidance.

A robust process for emergency stocks of PPE is available to access for a range of provision and partners in the borough. Shortages are captured through the Capacity Tracker, analysed as part of dashboard reporting, and discussed on a weekly basis at the Care Home Strategy & Support Group.

Stockport will continue to use the Infection Control Fund (discretionary element) to support providers that incur additional costs for PPE, where appropriate.

1.3 Covid 19 Testing

Stockport has a strong record of accomplishment in relation to supporting our care homes with testing. We enabled symptomatic care home residents to be tested from an early stage of this pandemic and, in particular, we were one of few boroughs that established and retained a community swabbing service. This service has enabled us to offer testing within the care homes for symptomatic residents from early/mid-March. This service remains in place and has evolved over time to include staff testing at the Mastercall site base, and we have been consistent in our offer to test symptomatic residents. This has enabled us to be responsive to the changing eligibility and other offers provided nationally.

We have also enabled staff testing through our locally developed service in addition to the nationally commissioned services that have become available. As the varying offers (commissioned nationally) have become more complex, we have established a project management function, to coordinate staff testing requests and to help direct symptomatic care staff (and other key workers) to a testing site.

We are confident as a system that we have the necessary oversight and established relationships to support implementation of the areas mentioned above. In Stockport, there is the necessary support available for partners to respond to issues and problems within the care market and we have done so already on several occasions.

Stockport has ensured that routine testing is underway in all care homes with specific services for symptomatic cases and as mentioned above an outbreak management processes in place. A testing regime has been implemented 48 hours prior to discharge from hospital and into any care homes.

1.4 Seasonal Flu Vaccines

Stockport has a well-developed programme of seasonal flu vaccines. Early action this year has been taken with communications being sent to every home, care provider, & PA's directing them to their GP, Pharmacist or Mass Immunisations drive through. Homes can also commission pharmacies to undertake immunisations and will be reimbursed by the Council. We have seen record numbers of individuals getting a flu vaccination this year.

2. Collaboration across health and care services

The Local Authority along with colleagues in the health system have been working hard to establish it's Discharge to Assess programme and to build on a strong partnership to realign its resources and processes to ensure a more streamlined and effective process. This has resulted in agreement to a revised model including a commitment to provide the necessary resources to implement fully.

2.1 Safe discharge from NHS settings and preventing avoidable admissions

As part of our winter planning and utilisation of ring-fenced funding we are committed to jointly commission care packages for those discharged (including commissioning of care home beds). As part of the aforementioned D2A work we are in the process of establishing optimum bed, capacity required and determine if additional ones are needed on block booked basis.

Stockport continues to work with partners to coordinate activity, with local and national voluntary sector organisations, to provide services and support to people requiring support around discharge from hospital and subsequent recovery. There is a well-established commissioned service from the voluntary sector to support individuals out of hospital. In particular the AGE UK Placement Service, The Back Home Service and support in the wider community through the Prevention Alliance and Well-Being & Independence Network.

Health and Social Care partners in Stockport have commissioned a new 71-bed facility, Bramhall Manor, to care for patients who are well enough to be discharged from hospital but need further assessment to identify their ongoing care needs.

The new state-of-the-art facility at Bramhall Manor is part of a joint borough-wide plan to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Patients who are medically fit to be discharged from hospital will either be discharged home or will be transferred to out-of-hospital facilities for further assessment and support, such as Bramhall Manor.

This has freed up vital beds at Stepping Hill Hospital for patients who will need more intensive care due to COVID-19.

Additionally, following the letter from the DHSC regarding the establishment of designated settings for Covid positive individuals requiring out of hospital care, an entire floor has been commissioned to fulfil this role.

2.2 Enhanced Health and Technology in Care Homes

Through our winter planning monies allocation we have invested in Dignio an enhanced offer from Mastercall to Care Homes and the wider community. It is “Telehealth” monitoring solution of Blood Pressure, Pulse, temperature and oxygen saturation. It is to treat early exacerbations of conditions and chronic diseases; to rebalance capacity and demand, patient flow and impact on admissions avoidance. It is anticipated that 250 people within 6 months will be monitored with conditions such as Heart failure, COPD, Low level Sepsis, dehydration, pneumonia, cellulitis and the cohort will include:

- Outpatients who require 24/7 overnight monitoring
- Hospital Wards Patients who require IV Fluids and 5 day monitoring plan
- Care Home Patients who require consistent monitoring long term
- Intermediate care patients who require 24/7 overnight monitoring
- Primary care patients who may show signs of low level sepsis

In addition to the Dignio project, plans are underway for the development and implementation of a digital solution that will transform how Stockport’s care homes link with vital health and social care services. This will allow residents to continue to receive a high quality of care without disruption resulting from the changes in the way health and care is delivered due to the global Covid-19 pandemic and at pace relevant to their needs, delivered by the most appropriate professional, avoiding unnecessary interactions and preventing unnecessary hospital admissions.

2.3 Winter resilience in the Equipment and Adaptation teams

Historically the service has been very busy with high numbers of referrals. Capacity is maximised through use of self-assessment, fast track and training up trusted assessors. Prior to Covid, waiting lists were already high but a number of requests for support was successfully resolved during lockdown through enhanced triage, signposting and remote ordering of equipment / adaptations. Currently assessments are taking longer to complete. Information needs to be gathered from other professionals, the person and their families before the visit takes place. Completion of

Risk assessments and post risk assessments contributes to the increased time required. There has been a significant increase in requests for moving and handling assessments for informal carers. Consequently, only urgent/ moving and handling OT assessments are currently taking place so referrals from the OT waiting list are not being allocated. Through winter pressures monies additional capacity is being arranged to manage these issues.

3. Supporting people who receive social care, the workforce, and carers

3.1 Supporting independence and quality of life

In Stockport there is a regular assessment of whether visiting care homes is likely to be appropriate, given local conditions and taking into account the wider risk environment there is a robust process set up to review individual risk assessments from the homes in the Borough. There is also ongoing work to agree a GM wide approach that limits the use of blanket bans on visiting of care homes.

However, due to the status of tier 3 level of concerns, visits are limited to window visits, but we are working hard to support care home providers with alternative arrangements. For instance, tablet devices have been distributed to all care homes in order to facilitate video conferencing for professionals and to enable residents to communicate with their families. The Council has received positive feedback from care homes, residents and relatives who have described this as a lifeline during this challenging time.

3.2 Direct payments (DP)

Action has been taken with respect to direct payments to ensure that families and carers are able to meet their care and support needs this winter. Specifically, letters have been sent to people who receive a DP earlier in the pandemic along with a summary and copy of the DP government guidance. A second letter is under development in relation to ongoing PPE and support available through the Council. This letter will capture the essence of the new guidance and commitment to supporting people who have a DP over the winter period. Flexibility around the use of direct payments is being encouraged following discussions with social workers in relation to changing needs and outcomes brought about by the pandemic including the support needs of unpaid carers.

3.3 Unpaid Carers

For those that organise their own care a service has been commissioned through the voluntary organisation Signpost for Carers to provide additional carers assessments on top of the statutory duties of the Council. In addition, all carers who receive a Care Act assessment will routinely be offered support and relevant signposting to other organisations/services.

Ongoing work has been in place to support day services to operate and maintain at least 50% capacity to support individuals. This has been in the shape of support

financially in particular paying on planned support as well as practical support e.g. IPC advice.

3.4 Care Act easements

Care Act easements will be used only when necessary. A process is in place should Care Act easements be required however, this would only be enacted should SMBC be unable to meet Care Act requirements. Adult Social Care have contingency plans to allocate staff and resources to avoid easements if necessary. Should we need to initiate easements the Principal Social Worker in conjunction with the DASS will follow DHSC guidelines and would contact DHSC as part of the Easements protocol.

3.5 Supporting the Workforce

The Council continues to promote and summarise relevant guidance to care providers. This is facilitated through weekly newsletters and regular provider forums in place to disseminate all relevant guidance, discuss, and resolve any associated challenges.

To support the well-being of the wider workforce Stockport has commissioned Beacon counselling as support for all provider staff and links into the wider GM offer of support. This is promoted regularly to all providers in the borough.

3.6 Workforce Capacity

As part of our of sit reps and dashboard which is reviewed and responded to through Care Home support we continue to review contingency arrangements to help manage staffing shortages within social care provision through the winter.

The Capacity Tracker has been in place now for some time and regular contact and liaison with providers ensures that there is good compliance and follow up on any concerns. This workforce data helps ensure effective local capacity monitoring and planning.

3.7 Shielding

There is an established working group that has developed a comprehensive plan that can be implemented at short notice if required. All relevant areas within the Health and Social Care system are involved and aware of the arrangements. Within the plan are the details of over 11,000 who had been previously shielding and the capacity to identify more if needed.

4. Supporting the system

4.1 Funding

The Council, through the funding from the government to support the additional expenditure incurred because of the COVID-19 situation, has established a robust process. In Adult Social Care, we are required to support the sustainability of the entire provider market, this includes all care providers that are located within Stockport, including those that are not commissioned and under contract to the Council. Also included is support to individuals who are in receipt of a direct payment. We have implemented the first stage of IPC funding promptly and effectively and have used it

to support our care providers to maintain business continuity. We are well on our way to distribute the second stage of this funding and have solid monitoring processes to ensure the appropriate usage of these monies is adhered.

4.2 Market & Provider Sustainability

Stockport continues to work understand the local care market; and to support and develop it accordingly. Stockport is in an advanced position with respect to understanding and managing its care market. A risk and sustainability tool has been developed to provide an early warning system to identify risks associated with sustainability and provider failure. Our annual fee setting process has commenced. This is a key mechanism to understanding and managing the market here.

As highlighted in 4.1 above there is good support to our provider market as needed, in order to secure continuity of care, including promoting the financial support available. We have ensured IPC monies has been distributed promptly and equitably.

Finally, as part of wider market engagement we will ensure that a regular joint communication by the Director of Adult Social Services and Deputy Public Health will be sent to our providers.

I trust this provides you with a good overview of the work being undertaken by system partners in Stockport and confidence in the plans and support we are putting in place to support partners throughout the winter. Please note we would be pleased to share to share our Winter Plan Action Template and our IPC funding, which details how these monies will be distributed and monitored. Our intention to publish our complete suite of documentation regarding winter planning on the Council's website in the public domain.

I will be pleased for Stockport partners to speak further with regional colleagues on the processes we have put in place and to understand our joint working to support the care sector. This will be particularly valuable to learn from best practice and identify potential areas of support Stockport could benefit from.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Mark Fitton', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mark Fitton