



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2020/21

HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	
8TH DECEMBER 2020 REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES	Adult Services: Covid-19 response and winter planning

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report to provide the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee with an update on Adult Services response to the Covid-19 pandemic in Rhondda Cynon Taf. This report also provides an overview of the plans in place across health and social care that addresses the challenges associated with both the Covid-19 pandemic and the usual winter pressures across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee:

- 2.1 Acknowledges the information contained within the report; and
2.2 Scrutinises and comments on the information provided.

3. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To provide the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee with an opportunity to examine Adult Services Covid-19 on-going response and the plans in place to support the increased pressures placed on health and social care during the winter period.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 ("the Act) sets out how people's care and support needs should be met, ensuring local authorities place



people's wellbeing at the centre of all it does. The Covid-19 pandemic placed considerable pressures on adult social care making it necessary for the Welsh Government to introduce modifications to the Act, which provides a relaxation of some local authority duties around the provision of care and support needs, alongside an ethical framework specific for adult social care.

- 4.2 Adult Services in Rhondda Cynon Taf continues to work within its statutory duties, although there continues to be some temporary disruption while we prioritise services and modify care and support offers, based on assessed need and risk.
- 4.3 As the pandemic continues, Adult Services are experiencing growing pressures as more people need care and support, and whilst currently all decisions are being made are in line with our Act duties and other Covid-19 guidance, we may need to revisit these decisions in the future if we face any significant staffing and demand pressures as a result of changes in the infection rate relating to Covid-19.
- 4.4 The Covid-19 pandemic has meant that Adult Services has needed to implement new ways of working and extensive national guidance, in partnership with health and social care providers and partners, to ensure the continued delivery of quality care and support through the pandemic period. The guidance has been very frequently revised and updated and a key role for Adult Services has been to ensure that partners and all providers are fully aware of and supported to implement new guidance. New and significant guidance continues to be issued.
- 4.5 The Covid-19 pandemic has brought changes to the lives of everyone in society and most particularly to those who use adult social care services and their carers. The majority of people who use adult social care services have complex health needs and/or disabilities and many have been "Shielded" during the pandemic period. There have been very significant demands on all staff working in Adult Services and across the adult social care provider sector.

5. COVID-19 CURRENT RESPONSE

- 5.1 At its meeting on 14th September 2020, the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee were provided with a verbal report in relation to Adult Services response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the developing recovery actions at that time.
- 5.2 The table below provides an update on Adult Services recovery actions, which are included in the Council's 2020/21 Corporate Plan.

Actions	Update
<p>5.2.1 Continue to assess and prioritise cases, in accordance with the flexibilities afforded by the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) 2014 Act, based on need and risk in a way that safeguards people and involves them and their families in decision making.</p>	<p>Assessments continue to take a person-centred approach as far as practicable and visits by social work staff are undertaken safely, where necessary.</p> <p>The focus has been on ensuring that people with an assessed need and carers continue to be able to access information, advice, assessments and services and to minimise harm and adverse impacts in terms of the Covid-19 virus and of lockdown restrictions.</p> <p>Changes to the way we work, and the services offered have impacted some older people and those with a physical disability, learning disability or mental illness. These impacts are mitigated through the use of interim support services for people and carers with the greatest needs. All arrangements will be reviewed at the declared end of the pandemic.</p> <p>Workloads across adult services remain high and caseloads are becoming increasingly more complex as the Covid-19 pandemic continues and there remains a waiting list of cases awaiting allocation, across Care and Support and in the ACE Team.</p> <p>The Council has continued to respond to safeguarding concerns reported. The referral rate into the safeguarding team is consistent with pre-Covid-19 levels and there is no particular pattern of concerns.</p> <p>Additional external support continues to be commissioned to reduce assessment and review backlogs across Care and Support.</p> <p>Accessing service provision is becoming more difficult due to capacity issues in some areas and increasing staff absence. This continues to be subject to ongoing review with the aim of ensuring people receive the care and support based on their assessed need.</p>
<p>5.2.2 Continue to work with NHS Partners to ensure people are discharged safely and timely from hospital and supported in the community with</p>	<p>Hospital discharges have continued to be a priority for Adult Services and its providers – this work has increased through the pandemic and returned to pre-Covid-19 levels.</p> <p>Capacity to take on new work has become more limited and delays arranging care packages and care homes placements (dementia and nursing dementia) are increasing and some discharges are taking longer to complete.</p>

<p>appropriate health and social care support.</p>	<p>Covid-19 hospital outbreaks during the Autumn significantly impacted on patient discharges and new enhanced protocols have been developed to ensure that people with care and support needs are safely and expediently discharged.</p> <p>Where people ready to be discharged to their own home or care home, this should only take place where they have been tested and have not tested positive for Covid-19. Where patients do test positive for Covid-19, the current agreed pathway is for a patient to remain in hospital care for the period when they continue to be infectious.</p> <p>During November 2020, Adult Services supported circa. 130 discharges from hospital back home or to a care home setting.</p>
<p>5.2.3 Continue to work in partnership with Linc Cymru to deliver the extra care housing schemes at Pontypridd (Cwrt yr Orsaf) and Porth and enable more people to live independently in their own home</p>	<p>Construction of the new state-of-the-art 60 apartment Cwrt yr Orsaf facility began during summer 2019. It will include dining areas, a communal kitchen, lounge areas, a hair salon and SPA, communal landscaped gardens, together with an integrated day care unit.</p> <p>We are working close with Linc Cymru and their contractor Jehu – adhering to UK Government and Construction Leadership Council guidance to ensure social distancing. Construction at Cwrt yr Orsaf has remained ongoing during the whole of the Covid-19 pandemic and whilst experiencing some impacts and delays, the works have progressed well, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concrete and lightweight steel frame superstructure works are complete and external brickwork on the lower ground floors is ongoing; • Pitched roof trusses have been erected to all roof areas and roof tiling, fascias, soffits and rainwater goods is ongoing to pitched roof areas, including flat roof areas; • Internally, room boarding and partitioning along with mechanical and electrical and carpentry first fix works have started from the lower floors upwards. <p>Artist drawings and photos of Cwrt yr Orsaf can be found at Appendix 1a & 1b of this report.</p> <p>The majority of the work to be completed is now internal which is where the biggest impact of the</p>

	<p>current Covid-19 measures will be experienced and it is with some caution we are reporting an anticipated completion date of August 2021 at this stage. This will be re-evaluated regularly during the remaining period.</p> <p>Cwrt yr Orsaf will be the third extra care facility in Rhondda Cynon Taf after Ty Heulog in Talbot Green and the recently opened (May 2020) Maesyffynnon extra care facility in Aberaman. There are currently 22 residents living there and new residents are moving in based on need and risk. A video of Maesyffynnon can found at Appendix 2 of this report.</p> <p>Extra Care proposals for Porth are being reported to Cabinet on 3rd December 2020.</p>								
<p>5.2.4 Continue to work in partnership with housing providers to deliver modern additional supported housing accommodation for vulnerable people, including Crown Avenue, Treorchy and Oxford Street, Mountain Ash.</p>	<p>Crown Avenue refurbishment completed in early October 2020. Assessments of new tenants have started, and the first tenants are planned to move in during December 2020.</p> <p>Construction of the Oxford Street, Mountain Ash has made good progress through the pandemic and is due to be completed in spring 2021.</p> <p>Development of a new housing with care and support strategy for vulnerable adults is underway to confirm the Council's approach to ensure that it can adapt and respond to future service demands and requirements.</p>								
<p>5.2.5 Continue to ensure that care homes and other care providers receive appropriate ongoing operational and financial support as the situation continues to evolve in line with Welsh Government guidance.</p>	<p>A range of measures remain in place to ensure, where possible, the resilience of our commissioned care providers in ensuring safety, capacity and sustainability of provision. Feedback from our care providers continues to be positive in that they have found this supportive - reinforcing our long-established relationships.</p> <p>The Council continues to facilitate hardship funding allocated by Welsh Government to help meet the additional costs adult social care providers are incurring as a result of Covid-19. Payments made to external care providers between April and October are set out below:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="624 1865 1272 2018"> <tr> <td>Domiciliary Care</td> <td>£ 509,616.93</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Direct Payment</td> <td>£ 104,561.35</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Residential Care</td> <td>£3,726,159.84</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Supported Living</td> <td>£ 628,963.88</td> </tr> </table>	Domiciliary Care	£ 509,616.93	Direct Payment	£ 104,561.35	Residential Care	£3,726,159.84	Supported Living	£ 628,963.88
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<p>5.2.6 Work with care homes to implement procedures with them to safely accommodate visits from friends and family in line with Welsh Government guidance.</p>	<p>Virtual visits remain an option for all care homes. In terms of physical visits, in accordance with current guidance, all care homes must be Covid-19 free prior to any visits being facilitated. If a positive result is reported within the care home, then all visits must be suspended for a period of 28 days, in line with Public Health Wales Guidance. Care home Covid-19 status can frequently change, but in the best interest of residents and their families we actively encourage visits when we are in a position to do so.</p> <p>All Council care homes have developed robust risk assessments outlining the procedures visitors must comply with prior to and during visits. These include strict restrictions on who can visit, PPE and sanitizing guidelines when attending the care home. All care homes have identified safe visiting areas within the home and have introduced systematic measures to safely coordinate and record all visits.</p> <p>We have also contacted all independent sector care homes sharing relevant guidance and advising that as long as they are Covid-19 free and have the required risk assessment in place which is in line with Welsh Government guidance that they can commence visits and thereby ensure a consistent approach can be maintained across the market sector.</p>
<p>5.2.7 Continue to review options for phased opening of day and respite services in line with demand and social distancing guidelines.</p>	<p>Our current day service and respite offer is as follows:</p> <p>All older people day centres are temporarily closed i.e. Tonyrefail; Trecynon; Riverside and Bronllwyn.</p> <p>All older people with dementia day centres are open at reduced occupancy levels, in line with social distancing guidance i.e. Cwmni Dda (Trecynon); Lewis Merthyr Day Unit (Treorchy) and Tonteg Day Unit Pontypridd).</p> <p>The following learning disability and autism day centres are open at reduced occupancy levels, in line with social distancing guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Llwynypia Learning Curve • Gadlys Learning Curve (Aberdare) • Talbot Green Day Learning Curve • Abercynon Learning Curve • Danymynydd Learning Curve (Porth) • Autism Life Centre (Trealaw)

	<p>All other learning curve centres and work-based projects remain closed, but we will continue to review the need to open the remaining centres based on demand and Covid-19 guidance.</p> <p>The following learning disability respite accommodation are open, based on need and risk, in line with social distancing guidance - Beech Cottage (Aberaman); Belle Vue (Treforest); Ystradfechan Bungalow (Treorchy) and Brynsadler (Pontyclun).</p> <p>In addition to the above, we are ensuring, where necessary, based on assessed need and risk, that there is alternative care and support at home through outreach services and direct payments for people and their families affected by these temporary changes.</p>
<p>5.2.8 Work with regional partners to continue the phased reopening of regional equipment services to full capacity and restarting of windows manufacturing at Vision Products.</p>	<p>The Community Equipment Service at Vision Products continues to provide a full range of services, based on prioritised need and increases in demand, to health and social care partners across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region.</p> <p>Vision Products have been commissioned to provide regional management of Welsh Government issued PPE from 1st December 2020, following agreement by Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf Councils.</p> <p>Manufacture and installations of UPVC windows on a phased basis commenced from October 2020 at Vision Products.</p>

- 5.3 The period since September 2020 has continued to be demanding operationally as we ensure that people with an assessed need who require information, advice, guidance, assessment, care and safeguarding are supported. Covid-19 has impacted so many people and as the pandemic continues, we have experienced an increase in requests for more intensive care and support.
- 5.4 Some people and their carers have elected, since March 2020, to decline services because of concerns about Covid-19. As a result, some people have relied disproportionately on carers and family during the pandemic and there is now evidence that this is leading to a raised demand for adult social care. It is clear that support for carers is becoming an increasing issue.
- 5.5 The separation from family and friends has been a difficult issue for many and particularly for people living in care homes and supported living environments who in normal circumstances would have contact with relatives and friends. The Council's Supported Living Service and commissioned providers have made



use of new technologies to ensure communication between family members and friends and as the pandemic continues providers are developing ways to enable contact, which is in line with recently issued Welsh Government guidance.

- 5.6 As the impact of the pandemic continues, we have noted a steady increase in staff across the adult social care sector unable to work due to self-isolation and Covid-19 symptoms as well as those diagnosed with Covid-19. There has also been a steady increase in staff isolating as a result of Test, Track and Protect and related issues such as childcare when children have been sent home from school needing to isolate. This steady increase is compounded by non-Covid-19 related sickness and the need to ensure all staff are taking their required annual leave. There are also understandable concerns about the very significant pressures on the resilience and wellbeing of some staff across the adult social care sector due to the impact of Covid-19 related anxieties and pressures of home-work life balance during this extremely challenging time.
- 5.7 Within Adult Services, we have continued to provide support and monitoring for our staff and we have worked with Human Resources via counselling, wellbeing and Occupational Health Services to ensure our workforce is appropriately supported. Some examples to date include:
- Human Resources staff allocated to specific employees to keep in touch with via telephone on a weekly basis (where identified as in need of specific support);
 - Care homes given direct access to a senior counsellor for specialised support where staff experienced sudden or traumatic events;
 - A new dedicated wellbeing helpline was set up on 27 March 2020 and was available to all staff to access via telephone or email. The wellbeing line offers support for both employee physical and mental wellbeing covering a range of topics such as mental and physical wellbeing, nutrition, sleep and weight management.
 - Occupational Health have continued to provide a clinical service for counselling, nurse, doctor, physiotherapy and health surveillance via telephone (and more recently a restricted face to face appointments)
 - A dedicated area was created on RCT Source with a range of support information for staff e.g. information of Covid-19 guidance, wellbeing area, nutrition, sleep and working from home.
 - A dedicated 7-day Covid testing booking line for key workers and their families was introduced to increase the availability of testing capacity.



- Occupational Health have introduced the flu campaign, in support of the national drive to encourage people to take up the flu vaccine.

6. CARE HOMES

- 6.1 The Covid-19 pandemic has been challenging for care homes across Wales and Rhondda Cynon Taf due to the nature of the virus and impact on the older generations within our communities.
- 6.2 The impact of Covid-19 on our care homes, staff and residents has been significant. In Rhondda Cynon Taf, there are currently 37 care homes with a total of 1,449 registered beds for older people - in February 2020, care homes were reporting 165 empty beds and in September 2020 they are reporting 363 empty beds, but, importantly, we have not yet lost a provider due to the pandemic.
- 6.3 All care homes staff and residents are currently tested 2 weekly. This process has identified asymptomatic residents and staff and infection control measures are immediately followed in response. The current situation in Rhonda Cynon Taf care homes as at the 26th November 2020 is summarised below:
- 20 care homes have a reported outbreak and have to followed Public Health Wales 28 day Covid-19 free restrictions
 - 51 staff with suspected or confirmed Covid-19
 - 40 residents with suspected or confirmed Covid-19
- 6.4 Sadly, despite following IPC guidance and caring for people in isolation where this was required, Rhondda Cynon Taf has experienced deaths of people symptomatic or confirmed as Covid-19 positive in its care home population, including Council care homes. The fact that this was not unexpected in a pandemic from an easily spread airborne disease does not take away from the impact that every death had on family and the care home and adult social care. In light of this impact, we have continued to work with Human Resources, as mentioned above, to ensure our workforce is appropriately supported and the opportunity, where relevant, has been extended to independent sector care providers.
- 6.5 Welsh Government have developed a national action plan to support care homes across Wales following a rapid review by Professor John Bolton during the Summer. A copy of the rapid review for care homes in relation to Covid-19 is at attached at Appendix 3 for Members information. A summary of progress against these actions has been published at: <https://gov.wales/care-homes-action-plan>.
- 6.6 The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board have developed a regional action plan to focus on key areas identified through Professor John Bolton's rapid review and to help prevent the spread of the virus and to support



residents and care home staff. A copy of the regional action plan can be found at Appendix 4.

7. WINTER PRESSURES

- 7.1 As we move into the busy winter months, health and social care staff will be working together, building on our experience in previous winters, to deliver responsive and joined-up services throughout this winter season. Covid-19, means that this year looks very different so it's even more important that health and social care have a joint approach and plan in order that we are able to work collaboratively and provide the safest care for people in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 7.2 Winter is a high-pressure season for health and social care services, leading to increased demands on hospitals, GPs and social services. To keep people safe and well over the winter period, it is important that we work together to provide the right support at the right time - making sure that people are cared for outside of hospital, too. This is a key priority for the Council and in particular Adult Services.
- 7.3 As in previous years, Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board has been required this year to prepare an annual Winter Protection Plan in response to the Welsh Government Winter Protection Plan. The Plan has been developed in partnership with regional statutory and voluntary sector partners and builds to demonstrate an integrated regional plan and an approach that is deliverable and addresses the challenges associated with both the Covid-19 pandemic and usual winter pressures across the region.
- 7.4 The Plan builds on existing plans that focus on preventing four harms by:
- Remaining ready to provide the full range of services needed to prevent, diagnose, isolate and treat Covid-19 patients and
 - Ensuring that we can continue to provide services that are essential at all times. This includes services that are urgent and life threatening or life impacting as well as services that without timely intervention could result in harm over the longer term such as maintaining vaccination programmes;
 - Reinstating routine services where it is operationally possible and safe to do so, with strict adherence to infection prevention and hygiene procedures and maximising the use of virtual consultations;
 - Health and social care professionals working tirelessly to ensure people have been prioritised according to need and what matters to them.
- 7.5 The Plan also looks to support and retain new ways of working adopted in the first Covid-19 wave which supported integrated working between health, social care and third sector. This means:



- A whole system approach where seamless support, care or treatment is provided as close to home as possible;
 - Services designed around the individual and around groups of people, based on their unique needs and what matters to them, as well as quality and safety outcome;
 - People only going to a general hospital when it is essential, with hospital services designed to reduce the time spent in hospital;
 - A shift in resources to the community that enable hospital-based care, when needed to be accessed more quickly; using technology to support high quality services.
- 7.6 A copy of the Plan, attached at Appendix 5 for Members information, was submitted to Welsh Government on 30th October 2020, following endorsement, as required by Welsh Government, by Regional Partnership Board.
- 7.7 Welsh Government as in previous years has allocated additional funding to support delivery of health and social care services during this winter and this has been further supplemented by additional Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board funding. For the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region, the Health Board and partners will look to deploy a circa **£10m** additional funding towards winter protection, subject to approval by Welsh Government, including:
- Health Board Allocation - Primary Care: £1.2m
Health Board Allocation - Hospital and Community Health: £6.0m
Third Sector Allocation - Community Resources & Third Sector: £0.5m
Council Allocation - Discharge to Assess Pathways & Care Home Support: £2.0m
- 7.8 The announcement of the additional funding for delivery of Discharge to Recover and Assess Pathways & Care Home Support by Welsh Government on 5th October 2020 was very welcomed and will provide important additional capacity for care and support services that will prevent unnecessary admission to hospital and enable people to leave hospital when they are ready in order to provide care closer to home and limit time in hospital unless essential, in line with key commitments by Welsh Government and by this Council in our Corporate Plan.
- 7.9 Proposals include additional capacity to support:
- @home services (i.e. Stay Well @Home) and other domiciliary care provision
 - Carers, including crisis support
 - Community equipment services



- Social work and community occupational therapist assessments
- Care homes placements, including in particular 121 support for dementia

7.10 The discharge to Assess Pathways and Care Home Support funding has been allocated specifically to the Local Authorities in region. The breakdown of funding across the local authority areas is based on the social services funding formula and is approximately:

- Rhondda Cynon Taf - £1.2m
- Bridgend - £0.61m
- Merthyr Tydfil - £0.28m

7.11 A range of performance measures will be used to measure the impact of the Winter Protection Plan, including:

- Preventing hospital admission for specific conditions / complaints.
- Timeliness, quality and frequency of assessment in Emergency Departments.
- Improving flow of patients through hospital to reduce risk of harm and delays in onward care.
- Focusing on timely transfer home to reduce risk of harm and improve outcomes.
- Discharge data.
- Delayed transfers of care.
- Flu rates.

7.12 The National Programme for unscheduled and the NHS delivery Unit will support evaluation and measurement in relation to Discharge to Recover and Assess elements of the Plan and there will be regular progress updates through the Regional Partnership Board governance structure and within sovereign bodies as required.

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 This is an information report - there are no equality and diversity implications associated with this report.

9. CONSULTATION

9.1 This is an information report - there is no consultation required for this report.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 This is an information report - there is no financial implications aligned to this report.



11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 11.1 This report identifies the work of Adult Services in Rhondda Cynon Taf that allows the Council to meet the requirements of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

12. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 12.1 This report supports the Council's People corporate priority - promoting independence and positive lives for everyone.
- 12.2 The work of Adult Services outlined in this report contributes to the following wellbeing goals, namely: a Wales of cohesive communities, a healthier Wales and more equal Wales and due regard has been made to the five ways of working, as contained within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

13. CONCLUSION

- 13.1 Whilst it is not possible to cover all of the work undertaken across Adult Services in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, this report highlights key issues and acknowledges the work and dedication of all care staff in Rhondda Cynon Taf. It also outlines the work undertaken in order to support all social care providers as they have worked with skill and commitment to provide quality care to people and carers through the unique and highly complex circumstances of the pandemic.
- 13.2 The response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the plans that are in place to support the increased pressures placed on health and social care during the winter period would not have been as strong without the partnership approach that we have established across health and social care partners and providers.