

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

18 NOVEMBER 2020

STATEMENT OF COUNTY COUNCILLOR MICHAEL HARRISON

The impact of the pandemic on Health & Adult Services continues to be considerable, and I want to express my gratitude again to the whole team for their hard work throughout this incredibly challenging time.

The directorate has shown its flexibility and resilience and continues to support the NHS on timely and safe hospital discharges, preventing unnecessary hospital admissions and implementing revised working practices across a 7 day working pattern. In preparation for winter we have identified additional resources to continue to help keep care settings safe and Covid-19 secure and ensure our community reablement services can support more people in their own home.

Care Homes

We have seen a rise in care home outbreaks over recent weeks, but having established our Care Home Liaison protocol we are maintaining daily contact with providers where appropriate to identify support needs and monitor cases and outbreaks. Homes have access to Infection Prevention and Control teams, access to PPE and mobile testing. Testing has improved considerably and test results are largely received within 2-3 days. We have produced guidance on a range of issues including the correct use of personal protective equipment and hold weekly webinars with providers to share good practice, identify issues and provide updates on guidance.

We are working very closely with the NHS, Public Health partners and the Care Quality Commission to provide oversight and support, Quality Improvement Team support, escalation to Public Health England, the Department of Health and Social Care and the CQC of any issues requiring a national steer.

Care Home Visiting

We created a task force involving representatives of the care sector and relatives which resulted in us publishing guidance this month on enabling visits to care home residents. This is an essential step forward in recognising that in the medium to long term we have to find a way to enable contact with loved ones safely whilst protecting residents from infection. Along with support from our MP's we continue to press for nominated visitors to be included in care home testing.

Day Services

The Coronavirus Restriction Regulations which came into force on 5th November allow people to leave their homes to attend day services, respite and to visit care homes, so our approach to day services is continuing – with providers completing a self-assessment to provide assurance that they have considered all appropriate actions prior to opening and are Covid secure. The new regulations limit a gathering to 15 people so this will require some providers to reduce the numbers of people they support.

Hospital Discharges

A new discharge policy was introduced in September which has introduced free NHS care for people being discharged from hospital for up to 6 weeks, and we have established a Continuing Health Care team to help make the correct funding decisions. We will re-assess everyone previously discharged into a care setting since the start of the pandemic by the end of March 2021 and ensure that people are on the most appropriate funding stream.

In response to the Adult Social Care Winter Plan we have established designated locations for people who require either residential or nursing care and are testing positive for Covid-19 and have symptoms or are within the isolation period of the infection. People will transfer to a designated setting to complete their isolation period before moving to their usual / new care home. This will help protect residents of care homes from the risk of transmission related to new admissions.

Home Support Service Transfer

The transfer of the Henshaws Harrogate Home Support Service into the Council's Provider Services team was completed in early October. This service provides care and support for 17 people with a learning disability in 7 supported living properties in the Harrogate area, and the council intervened to ensure the sustainability of the service. We were delighted to welcome 31 staff members who successfully moved across to become employees of the Council, and I am sure this is going to be a great success and will provide an exciting new offer from the Council's Provider Services team.

Extra Care

Despite being impacted by the pandemic the extra care programme continues to progress. Two schemes have opened in the last year - in Great Ayton and in Scalby Road, Scarborough – and three schemes are due to open next year albeit with slightly later completion dates. A scheme in Skipton is now due in May 21, Bentham in June 21 and a Filey scheme is due in July 21. All these may be subject to further change depending on further pandemic impact.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR MICHAEL HARRISON