

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

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| Committee | Hampshire Health and Wellbeing Board |
| Date: | 2 July 2020 |
| Title: | Covid-19: Hampshire Welfare Response |
| Report From: | Director of Adults' Health and Care |

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Purpose of this Report

1. To describe at a high level the work that has taken place to date in Hampshire to support the welfare of its more vulnerable citizens since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.
2. To provide an overview of the systems that have been put in place by Hampshire County Council, Borough and District Councils, the Hampshire CVS (Council for Voluntary Service) Network, the wider voluntary sector and other partners to meet the needs of those people during the pandemic period.

Recommendations

3. That the Hampshire Health and Wellbeing Board notes the work that has taken place to date by the public and voluntary sector organisations and their partners in Hampshire to support the needs of its most vulnerable citizens and the wider community.
4. That the Hampshire Health and Wellbeing Board is assured by the systems that have been put in place across Hampshire, as set out in this report, to support the county's most vulnerable residents as well as the wider community during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Executive Summary

5. This report outlines the extensive work already undertaken in Hampshire; provides details of response of the different organisations who have come together to meet the needs of people in Hampshire, particularly the most vulnerable, due to the impact of Covid-19; and provides details of the number of people who have been supported in Hampshire to date.

Contextual information

6. The coronavirus pandemic has had a pervasive impact on all aspects of life and upon Adult Social Care. The impact of the illness is causing distress for a larger proportion of the population than was known to Adults' Health and Care before the crisis. For example, social isolation and shielding have led to an increase in the number of vulnerable people requiring support with items such as access to food, medication, and social contact.
7. There are new demands on the existing health and social care system. For example, increasing requirements around swift hospital discharge with a need for the creation of extra capacity in care homes and domiciliary care, and in some situations increased complexity of need for services to manage.
8. Necessary requirements around social distancing are leading to social isolation and this is especially challenging for those with dementia, learning disabilities, mental health problems or autism and is also very difficult for their carers. Some services, such as day opportunities, have had to be stopped in their current form, to comply with social distancing. In addition, family carers may become ill, or their loved one may become ill with Covid-19 and require more support.
9. Hampshire is a geographically large county with approximately 1.3m residents. It has a two-tier system of local government with 11 borough and district councils as well as Hampshire County Council, therefore an effective and co-ordinated response to dealing with impacts of the pandemic is required.

Role of Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum (LRF)

10. The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum (LRF) is a partnership which works together to help people in Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight stay safe. Its aim is to reduce risk in the community and help people be prepared for emergencies. The LRF includes emergency services, councils, businesses and voluntary organisations. Through the LRF, organisations work together to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies.
11. The LRF has also been actively involved in supporting care homes including sourcing PPE equipment, as well as implementing wider emergency measures and all public health and Government advice.
12. During the pandemic the welfare workstream within the LRF has played a key role in ensuring a co-ordinated approach in response to Covid-19. It has ensured significant issues have been escalated where appropriate and has provided mutual support when protecting the most vulnerable in response to Covid-19, including support for those who might struggle to access services, such as rough sleepers, and the provision of support for all frail and vulnerable adults requiring help due to their vulnerability, because they are shielding or due to social isolation.

The Welfare Response in Hampshire: Meeting the needs of vulnerable people Hampshire County Council

13. Significant progress has been made in a very short time to coordinate support at local level to meet vulnerable people's urgent needs in response to Covid-19. The Director of Adults' Health and Care has chaired the welfare response hub (LRF) for Hampshire across local authorities in the Hampshire area and in collaboration with Public Health, district councils, the voluntary and community sector and faith communities as part of the Coronavirus response.
14. As part of the Hampshire County Council area response, a Helpline called Hantshelp4vulnerable was established and widely advertised where advisers triage calls from vulnerable people who are seeking help. Callers are:
 - provided with information and signposting including, where appropriate, to the NHS;
 - referred to 11 district based Local Response Centres where they are connected to local support to access food, prescription collection and other forms of support – provided by district councils in partnership with local voluntary sector organisations, groups and local councils, drawing on local volunteers;
 - referred to the County Council's Adults' Health and Care Welfare Team where more complex needs and personal care requirements are identified. They may also draw on voluntary support from the Local Response Centres in addition to other care and support. They would pick up any issues related to adult safeguarding or domestic abuse and any urgent issues.
15. Hampshire County Council Adults' Health and Care has taken the responsibility of proactively contacting all residents identified as extremely clinically vulnerable by the Government who have not yet registered on line for the scheme, or who have registered and have requested support due to delays in provision of food parcels or priority delivery slots through the Government scheme, or where the Government scheme does not meet their specific dietary requirements. As of 9 June, 53,223 residents in Hampshire have been identified by the NHS as extremely vulnerable and advised to shield.
16. In total 31,281 Hampshire residents have registered on the government site of which 6,597 residents indicated that they require help. The County Council has been using a range of communication methods, such as texts, messaging to land lines, outward bound calls and home visits depending on the circumstances and contact details made available by the Government. Where required, regular follow-up reviews are arranged. A proportion of the extremely vulnerable residents and indeed, other vulnerable people who are not on the extremely vulnerable list are already known to, or in receipt of social care services from the County Council and are being contacted through community social work teams. Many GPs are also separately contacting their own vulnerable patients to ensure they are aware of support available. These arrangements provide a comprehensive system of support for all residents although the LRF are continuing to review and improve our response. Of

course, many vulnerable residents are accessing local support directly from friends, neighbours and family, from local volunteers and support groups, district and local (parish and town) councils.

17. A welfare team has been formed from Adults Health and Care staff taking on additional roles and extending from five to seven day working in order to make these welfare calls. Calls have been reassuring to the public and there has been significant positive feedback from people. For example, one resident said *"I can't thank you all enough for the help I've been given. The whole process has been very efficient from the letter's I've received from the Government, to the fantastic food parcel delivery this week, assistance with being given a priority slot with the supermarket and the phone call to offer further support. I have been very overwhelmed with it all. Please can you thank everyone for me"* Another said *"Just wanted to thank HCC in helping me and my wife with providing a food parcel during Covid-19 lockdown it was very much appreciated and just need to show my gratitude as too many people these days complain about local councils. We have had excellent service with medication deliveries, refuse collections and a phone call early on was very good. It's been a very tough time for all during these very unprecedented times...THANK YOU HCC keep up the good work."*
18. By the 9th June the hantshelp4vulnerable call centre had received 13,066 calls. Of these 2,665 were provided with information or signposted to additional advice and support; 5781 were referred to Local Response Centres; and 2,854 were identified as having more complex needs and were referred to the County Council's Welfare Team. only 836 callers already received a service from Adults Health and Care.
19. The districts with the highest number of referrals from the contact centre have been New Forest (924 referrals), Basingstoke (904) and Havant (871). Winchester (466), East Hants (487), Hart (361) and Gosport (343) are in the mid - range of referrals, whilst Eastleigh (340), Fareham (289), Test Valley (267) and Rushmoor (259) have the lowest number. It is important to note that the number of referrals may not reflect the full use of volunteers in any District as some continued to operate pre-existing referral routes for volunteers and these will not be reflected in the numbers here.
20. Help with food shopping (2972 calls) and prescriptions (1870 calls) have consistently been the two main reasons for residents contacting the call centre followed by feeling isolated and lonely (251 calls), information and advice (145 calls) and dog walking (77 calls).
21. Currently, feedback is that there is sufficient volunteer capacity to support vulnerable people in Hampshire with their essential needs and that the County Council has a robust plan in place for those who find it difficult to access support. It does seem that the numbers of people requiring support have reduced over the last few weeks. Recovery plans are now being made and we await Government advice on any changes to arrangements for shielded people. Shielding measure are currently in place until the end of June.

Role of the Borough and District Councils and Local Response Centres

22. There are 11 borough and district councils across Hampshire. Each of these councils have set up, and are running, Local Response Centres. The Local Response Centres bring together local council and voluntary sector professionals (via local CVS organisations) with volunteers to co-ordinate support at a neighbourhood level. They are working closely with local supermarkets and charities including foodbanks as well as with parish and town councils.
23. Borough and District Councils, along with the CVS organisations, have been able to use their extensive local community contacts and knowledge to ensure that the response within local communities is as effective as possible. This has also included tapping into resources at parish and town council level.

Role of the Voluntary Sector and volunteer capacity

24. Hampshire CVS (Council for Voluntary Services) Network is an alliance of 9 charity infrastructure organisations who work together to help Hampshire's charities, community groups and social enterprises to succeed and flourish. During the pandemic it has played a significant role in co-ordinating the response of the voluntary sector to help mitigate the impacts of the pandemic on local communities as well as providing support for voluntary organisations.
25. Around 4000 volunteers have signed up to new and existing frontline projects supporting vulnerable people across Hampshire. Organisations requiring volunteers are encouraged by Hampshire CVS network to visit their website to find the details of their local CVS, which will be able to match organisations with local volunteers.
26. Hampshire has seen a significant response in terms of people volunteering to help their local communities during this time. This has meant that on some occasions there have been more volunteers available than work for them to do. It has also meant that there has been less pull on the NHS volunteers that were recruited by central government. Currently, feedback is that there is sufficient volunteer capacity to support vulnerable people in Hampshire with their essential needs. However, this will be subject to continuous review and improvement through the Local Resilience Forum.
27. During this time the County Council along with its partners, including the Hampshire CVS network and Community Pharmacy South Central, has developed guidance for volunteers to help keep them safe. This guidance covers areas such as hygiene, reporting wellbeing and safeguarding concerns, as well as practical advice on topics such as handling money and dog walking.

Food Supply

28. One of the key priorities for the welfare response in Hampshire has been to ensure that those people who are isolating or shielding have sufficient food and other basic items. The LRCs have been instrumental in ensuring that

people have had food, as well as medicines and other basic supplies, delivered to them by volunteers where required.

29. The County Council and its partners have worked with supermarkets to ensure that from mid- April there was a prioritisation of delivery slots and click and collect slots for vulnerable people. Alongside this, work has taken place with local food producers and retailers to expand alternative home delivery networks, particularly for those people in need and who have been unable to receive supermarket deliveries.

Impact of COVID 19 on Mental Health

30. The mental health and emotional wellbeing of the population during the pandemic is a widely reported issue and cause for concern. A range of initiatives have been implemented alongside other statutory and voluntary sector partners in view of social distancing measures and closure of key services. Hampshire Mental Health Well Being Centres are now remotely accessible and continue to offer a service to those in need. The *Hantshelp4vulnerable* helpline has been strengthened by a dedicated advice line staffed by Solent MIND assisting people including carers feeling anxious in isolation. Specialist mental health support has been set up to provide advice and guidance to homeless accommodation schemes.

Impact of COVID 19 on People in Caring Roles

31. People who care for family members or others have largely been disproportionately impacted by the consequences of social distancing, isolation and shielding. Day services have been closed or have moved some services online; respite provision, particularly for people with learning disabilities, has largely been closed and carers have in some cases chosen to take over additional caring duties themselves in order to minimise carers coming into their homes.
32. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, carers' organisations, including Andover Mind, Carers Together and Princess Royal Trust for Carers have responded to support both carers and the wider community in Hampshire. They have extended the opening times of their helplines and have adapted and widened their service offerings to provide listening services, virtual peer groups for carers, making welfare calls to carers and running online workshops for carers, as well as making their services available to people who are self-isolating or shielding. In order to help those carers who need a physical break from their caring activities, Age Concern Hampshire has also set up a sitting service, to enable this to happen.
33. Adults' Health and care operational teams are carefully monitoring the situation for families to ensure that individuals with disabilities and older people continue to have their needs met and that carers are supported
34. In order to have oversight of the ongoing response to support carers, the County Council has set up a carers sub-group as part of its formal response to dealing with the pandemic. This group, which meets weekly online consists of carers, representatives from carers organisations in Hampshire and

operational staff from the County Council's Adults' Health and Care department.

Domestic Abuse

35. In the first three weeks of lockdown nationally there were sixteen domestic abuse related murders of women and children. Statistics show that this a rise of 165%. Domestic abuse charities Women's Aid and Refuge have seen an increase of calls since lockdown began but more significantly both are reporting growth in online calls for help.
36. Support and advice continue to be available in Hampshire for people if they, or someone they know, is experiencing domestic violence or abuse or is struggling to control their behaviour. This is provided by Hampshire Domestic Abuse Service and can be accessed by telephone or other methods such as Facebook Messenger.

Rough Sleepers

37. Significant effort has been made in collaboration across Local Authorities to meet the Government requirement that all homeless people living in Hampshire should be offered accommodation and move off the streets. In response to the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government instruction in March 2020, the borough and district councils worked intensively to accommodate all rough sleepers within their areas. This was a significant achievement with the majority of people being accommodated within 3 days.
38. To support this work, a multi-agency Homelessness Response Group has been set up. The objective of this group is to minimise the risk of harm from Covid-19 to people experiencing homelessness across the County and to ensure that appropriate support is available to this group to address health and other needs both during the pandemic and in the transition phase.
39. Work is taking place to look at transition planning for homeless people. This piece of work will capitalise on the positive relationships built up across the system over the last 2 months with the objective of improving outcomes for this client group longer term. The work undertaken to date provides an opportunity to support homeless people in a different way.
40. Partners need to be mindful of any future potential spike in infection rates and the need for a continued system-wide response to protect this vulnerable client group.

Consultation and Equalities

41. For reasons of urgency, formal consultation has not taken place to date.
42. Additional translation services are available as part of the *hantshelp4vulnerable* helpline, including specific British Sign Language (BSL) support via the County Council's Deaf Services Team

Finance

43. On 19 March 2020, the Government announced £1.6 billion of additional funding for local government to help them respond to Coronavirus pressures across all the services they deliver. This includes increasing support for the adult social care workforce and for services helping the most vulnerable, including homeless people. Hampshire County Council's allocation of this funding (across all its services) is £29,654,341. A further £1.6 billion was announced on 18 April, taking the total for the sector to £3.2 billion. Hampshire's share of this second tranche of funding has now been confirmed as £24,313,635.
44. Further details of the financial impact of Covid-19 are outlined and explored in the finance report to Hampshire County Council's Cabinet.

Next Steps (opportunities and risks moving forward)

45. The Covid-19 pandemic has seen an increased role of the state in the lives of individuals in this country. Locally, we have seen a significant increase in the number of people using services, such as the distribution of food and medicine, provided by local authorities and their partners. This creates an increased risk of people becoming dependent on these and other services. Recovery work has started with a concentration upon enabling people to support themselves, both physically and emotionally, wherever possible.
46. The response, in terms of volunteering, from the wider public has been exceptional. Making this sustainable, in order to support voluntary organisations in the future will be a critical challenge, both for these organisations but also their public sector partners.
47. The coming months will see the restoration or adaptation of public services in Hampshire within the boundaries created by the national and local situation regarding Covid-19. There will need to be a flexible approach across public services and their partners in the voluntary and community sectors to ensure this can be done safely, but also to ensure that the good working practices adopted during this crisis are not lost.
48. The closer working relationships that have been forged very quickly between the County Council and the county's Borough and District Councils should be maintained and built upon to ensure greater joined-up delivery of services and even better efficiencies for the people of Hampshire.
49. The period of the Covid-19 pandemic has also seen much closer working between the public authorities and voluntary and community sector organisations in Hampshire. This has ensured best use of resources to deliver services, including basics such as the provision of food and medicine. It is in the interest of all parties for such closer working to continue.

Conclusions

50. The welfare response to the Covid-19 pandemic in Hampshire has seen public sector organisations and their partners in the community and voluntary sectors and also in the private sector work closely together at pace to ensure they

support the immediate physical needs of the most vulnerable people in the county and also their wider emotional wellbeing.

51. In developing the systems required to respond to the constantly moving situation, each organisation has had its own role to play. Thanks to its unique position the County Council has had a pivotal role in co-ordinating the response across Hampshire, and also in setting up and running the call centre operation. The Borough and District Councils, along with the CVS network have been well-placed to co-ordinate the delivery to communities on the ground with the help of voluntary and community organisations, parish and town councils and individual volunteers.
52. As the different organisations involved in Hampshire's welfare response continue to re-establish and adapt their services, the lessons learned from the welfare response need to be captured, reflected on and used to inform future working practices where appropriate, including greater collaborative working across all organisations.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

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| Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity: | No |
| People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives: | Yes |
| People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment: | No |
| People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities: | Yes |

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

None

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

- 2.1 This report is an update so no individual Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken.