

29th May 2020

Directors Office
County Hall
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge
Wiltshire
BA14 8JN

To whom it may concern,

Wiltshire Covering Letter on Care Home Support

Please find Wiltshire Council's response to the Minister of State for Care's letter on 14th May. Our response has been signed off by:

- Accountable Officer, BSW CCG, Tracey Cox
- Director of Public Health, Kate Blackburn
- Director of Adult Social Services, Alison Elliott
- Chief Executive Officer of Wiltshire Care Partnership, Jo Howes and Chair of WCP, Matthew Airey
- Chair of the LRF, Kier Pritchard
- Chair of Health & Wellbeing Board and leader of Wiltshire Council, Cllr Philip Whitehead and Vice Chair of Health & Wellbeing Board, Dr Edward Rendell
- Chair of Healthwatch, Rob Jefferson and Acting Manager, Julie Brown

Our response has also been sent to the following in accordance to the guidance:

- All members of the Health & Wellbeing Board
- Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living-advocacy service for people with LD

Financial Support to Care Homes

Wiltshire responded at an early stage to the financial pressures faced by the care home sector, with an offer sent to providers on 7 April following a lengthy consultation. The Wiltshire response was developed in consultation with Wiltshire Care Partnership (our umbrella provider association) and all local providers. Wiltshire has not restricted its financial response to Local Authority funded customers or to care homes with whom we have a contract. The offer is attached as **Appendix 1**. The financial offer to care homes, as well as to domiciliary care and supported living providers, has placed the financial risk for additional COVID costs on the Local Authority which in turn will have a significant impact on the financial position of the Council. To date, the Council has made payments of £1.041 million to care homes and domiciliary providers to ensure their financial resilience in the face of the additional expenditure they have incurred.

	Care Home	Dom Care	Other	Total
Spend on Providers we have contracts with	851,978	99,884	34,676	986,538
Spend on Providers we do not have contracts with	53,625	0	947	54,572
Total	905,603	99,884	35,623	1,041,110

Daily Review of Care Homes

Since mid-April, the Council has worked in partnership with the CCG and CQC to review risks to and support needed by all local care homes. A COVID-19 provider team was established with a dedicated helpline and email address and operates 7 days per week. Council officers meet with the CCG twice weekly to discuss local providers and once a week they are joined by our local CQC Inspection Manager. They cover:

- Risk-financial, PPE, staffing
- Safeguarding risks
- Support needed

Evidence is collated daily through:

- National Capacity Tracker-Care Homes are offered support by the Council's Tracker Champion to complete it
- Safeguarding alerts
- Self-reporting by Care Homes to the COVID-19 team
- PHE outbreak and death alerts
- Other sources e.g. ONS, registration of deaths

The Council reports risks as follows:

- Via a daily risk log to the CCG, DPH and directors of ASC
- Weekly report on outbreaks, deaths, closures, PPE etc to the Chief Executives
- Daily report on capacity, PPE, outbreaks etc to the Director of Commissioning (shared three times a week with the DASS)

The Standard Operating Procedure is attached as **Appendix 2**.

The COVID-19 Team contacts each home that:

- Has self-reported red for PPE and/or staffing on the tracker
- We receive PHE notification about having an outbreak or death
- Local knowledge indicates that there is a level of risk

The team has spoken to every single care home in Wiltshire and will have telephone welfare checks with any home that there are concerns about due to the level of outbreak and deaths to ensure they feel supported.

I have attached for your reference only a copy of the care home report I receive as Chief Executive Officer in order to have the strategic oversight of risk. This contains confidential information and should not be published.

PPE

Wiltshire Council, in partnership with the LRF, had distributed PPE free to Care Homes when their local supply chain has broken down. To date the Council has made 163 deliveries of PPE to providers. The Council has not just used the LRF supply and has procured its own stock. The Council has responded to all requests for PPE and has distributed 57744 Type IIR masks, 21400 gloves, 18600 aprons, 29 bottles of hand gel and 20 visors. The Council's financial offer includes payment for all additional PPE that care homes themselves have purchased. **The return from the Capacity Tracker shows that only one care home reported it has insufficient PPE and this is testimony to our support.**

Local Authority Offer to Care Homes

The Council, working in partnership with the CCG and CQC, has been proactive in implementing a support programme to Care Homes. The support strategy is attached as **Appendix 3**. In summary:

- A dedicated support team and helpline (see above)
- A minimum of weekly webinars between the Council, CCG, CQC and care homes (there have now been about 1,000 participants on the webinars)
- Thematic webinars to provide advice and support to meet need e.g. infection control, PPE, media (157 care homes reported they had access to PPE training on the National Tracker)
- Delivery of PPE
- Support for media communications
- Weekly newsletter and regular communications to over 300 providers
- Care Home Advisory Group
- BSW CCG Care Home Oversight Group chaired by the Director of Nursing & Quality

The support offer to care homes can be flexed to increase capacity in the event of a second peak. Due to existing relationships and partnership arrangements, the Council has been able to use other networks to communicate across a broad section of the social care landscape, including with PAs and smaller private providers that we may not have had access to previously.

The CCG and Local Authority have also been working together to offer all care homes across Wiltshire the Infection Prevention and Control 'Train the Trainer' programme. This will include use of PPE and testing procedures and will be provided by local trainers who have received National Training. The training can be delivered remotely with the plan that this can then be cascaded within the home to all staff. Face to face training can be offered to any homes that request this. A draft Infection & Control Plan across health and social care is attached as

Appendix 3b which is another example of the proactive and joined up approach we have had for care homes.

Staffing

The Council, CCG and Wiltshire Health & Care have a clear process in place for identifying staffing needs in care homes and providing mutual aid. It must be noted that the Council and care home providers have collectively sought to restrict the movement of staff between care homes to reduce the spread of infection and any mutual aid is risk assessed. The majority of care homes have put in place robust contingency plans for staffing which have been shared with the Council.

The COVID-19 team work with providers to identify their staffing needs and any mitigating actions that can be taken to reduce the impact. Where appropriate, provider business continuity plans are activated. Where additional staffing costs are incurred, additional COVID costs claim forms can be submitted in line with the Council's financial offer.

Where providers are unable to access sufficient staffing to meet their residents' needs, they inform the COVID-19 team of their exact staffing requirements. The COVID-19 team will refer to Council operation's teams, Wiltshire Health & Care and the CCG to request staffing resources. A Partnership Agreement is put in place with the care home. To date, the Council has provided 4 members of staff to a care home experiencing staffing shortages. The CCG has allocated two members of staff (nurses) for 3 months to support one home which has developed a Hospital Discharge Support Unit. The COVID-19 team will work with the provider to carry out business continuity planning, should the full requested resource not be available.

The CCG has been working with the Regional Team to identify NHS staff returning to practice who could support Care Homes with a process to allocate staff is shortly to be agreed by the CCG Directors of People.

Health Offer to Care Homes

In response to the most recent request from NHS England to bring forward aspects of Enhanced Care in Care Homes, the approach in Wiltshire is to build upon the existing local support and make this as an offer of support to care homes, rather than providing unwanted support that has been centrally defined. The offer (attached as **Appendix 4**) includes:

- Regular contact and monitoring of risks
- Virtual weekly check-in meetings with a MDT
- Virtual 1:1 appointments and physical follow ups
- Pharmacy and medications support

The SOP is included as **Appendix 5**.

Alternative Accommodation

Wiltshire Council and CCG listened to concerns raised by care homes about the risk of infection spread via direct discharge from hospital and worked with OSJ and Wessex Care to develop a viable local alternative that afforded some protection and resilience. In order to protect care homes from infection outbreaks, we have established two Hospital Discharge Units with 47 beds. The purpose of the HDSUs is to provide bed-based support to people who are tested COVID 19 positive, or who are symptomatic (even if tested negative), when hospital care is no longer appropriate, or when a higher level of clinical care is required from home or care home (specification is included as **Appendices 6a & b**).

The HDSUs deliver the following support:

- Oxygen therapy
- Patients who require clinical intervention
- End of life care as either step up or step down; this may be for symptom management only and onward discharge to another setting or it might be required when death is imminent and cannot be managed in any other way
- Therapy support and Social Work intervention to determine longer term need with the aim of maximising independence

The HDSUs will also support step-up from other care homes when a customer is COVID-19 and their needs cannot be managed in the care home and an acute bed is not needed.

The discharge pathways from the acute and community hospitals are still determined by the ward and based on need. The preferred option is that the patient returns to their own home. In order to support a home first approach, the Wiltshire Council Reablement Service has been aligned with the Wiltshire Health and Care Community Health Rehabilitation service to create an integrated Home First pathway. The capacity within this pathway has been further expanded by working with key domiciliary care providers to maximise resilience and increase the numbers of people returning home.

Wiltshire Council has also established an in-house domiciliary care team, Wiltshire Support at Home who work in particularly rural areas where care is hard to broker. This reduces the need for care home placement. In addition, Wiltshire Council and CCG have purchased a block of 1 800 additional domiciliary care hours per week to ensure individual's longer-term care needs are met in the community.

Where someone needs more care than can be safely delivered at home, the decisions are based on COVID-19 status, with those needing more clinical care and COVID positive being cared for in the Hospital Discharge Support Units. Those people who need personal care support rather than clinical care and are COVID negative on assessment by test or symptoms are referred to our Discharge to Assess beds, where the individual is isolated for a minimum of 14 days before any move home or to a permanent bedded placement.

The Wiltshire social care and health system is confident that it has a proactive offer in place to support care homes. We work in partnership with providers, including those care homes in Wiltshire where we have no customers, to provide support that meet their needs and is respectful of the expertise of providers themselves. Collaboration and cooperation between the Council, CCG, Wiltshire Care Partnership and individual providers has been our strength and has provided a mechanism for bottom up, as well as top down solutions to the challenges we have faced. I have attached as Appendix 7 Wiltshire's report from the Capacity Tracker. It is testimony to that collaborative approach that only 5 homes that are currently open did not respond.

Yours Sincerely



Terence Herbert

Chief Executive Officer-People

Wiltshire Council