

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 11 DECEMBER 2020

Statement from: Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell OBE, Deputy Leader and Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health and Children's Services

ADULT CARE

Hospital Teams

Hospital Social Work Teams have continued to support the Acute Hospital Trusts throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. This involves over 40 staff working at the 3 main Hospital sites; Lincoln, Boston and Grantham plus Peterborough. Officers have worked hard to prepare for a busy winter and produced a Winter Plan with Health Partners. They will continue to support safe hospital discharges through the second wave of the pandemic. Adult Care continue to ensure that prior to discharge from Hospital service users are tested for Covid-19, and no discharges happen without a known test result, this continues to be essential for Providers of Social Care and enables informed decision making regarding the ability to meet a person's needs safely. The second wave of Covid-19 is proving to be more challenging for the Health and Social Care System with a higher rate of infections. Where possible we always try to discharge a service user back to the Care Home they were admitted from, however at times this is not always possible if the person is Covid-19 positive. To support Care Homes we have commissioned residential care beds in the County where people with a Covid-19 positive status can be discharged for a short period of time, this ensures that we continue to support all our other Care Homes with a greatly reduced risk of introducing Covid-19 into the Homes who have no cases.

Reablement Service (Libertas)

The Council temporarily stood down this function at the start of the pandemic to ensure enough care and support at home capacity was available to provide safe hospital discharges. This Service is now fully up and running again, ensuring that service users can benefit from a Reablement Service on discharge from hospital and to prevent unnecessary hospital admissions. The existing provider Libertas have been successful in the recent retendering of the Reablement Service and will continue to be our Reablement Provider.

Learning Disability Services

The Teams have worked hard to ensure people are supported and have continued to undertake face to face visits but the use of innovative ways of working and the utilisation of new technology such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams and WhatsApp have become invaluable in communicating with the people we support, their informal carers, and providers.

Day Services

The majority of our Day Service Centres have reopened and we anticipate this will continue over the winter period. The Centres are currently operating at a reduced capacity due to Covid-19 safety measures. In order to ensure a continuation of the Service a community based offer was designed and the numbers of people receiving this, new more personalised support has increased. With support delivered remotely, in addition to using video conferencing for virtual sessions. All Day Centre premises

have undergone a Review and Risk Assessment to ensure a Covid-19 safe service is provided. Revised transport options have been put in place and longer term transport options are being developed.

Community Mental Health Transformation Funding 2021/22 Wave 2

Lincolnshire was chosen as a Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP) to receive funding in 2019/20 of £2,898,000 and in 2020/21 £3,999,000 to provide:-

- A new place-based “all age” Mental Health Community Service built around the Primary Care Networks’ and the Core Neighbourhood Teams in Boston, Gainsborough, Grantham and Lincoln City South
- A new Community Rehabilitation Service
- A new Community Personality Disorder Service
- Expanded social prescribing to focus specifically on people with severe mental illness
- Expanded Managed Care Networks in four Neighbourhood Team Areas

Together with NHS colleagues we are working on a bid for 2021/22 Wave 2 Funding to extend Community Transformation to an additional four sites - East Coast (SOLAS, East Lindsey, First Coastal), Lincoln North (Imp) and Stamford (Four Counties). The ambition is that by 2023/24 Lincolnshire will have the following teams to provide additional Community Mental Health support:

- Countywide integrated place based Mental Health Teams
- Three Countywide Community Rehabilitation Teams
- Two to three Countywide Personality Disorder Service Teams

In order to ensure effective service delivery, we have increased the number of Social Workers within the Mental Health S75 Partnership Agreement to align to these sites.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Health Protection and Outbreak Management

Lincolnshire in general continues to do well in the fight against Covid-19. Detailed surveillance of local and national data is giving us real insight into what is going on behind the numbers and enables us to act in a targeted and proportionate fashion when problems or trends emerge. When we have issues, we are working very effectively in managing outbreaks and preventing on-going spread of the disease. This will all stand us in good stead to have as much freedom as possible for people and business when the period of national lockdown recently announced, comes to a close. It is essential that we ask our communities to redouble their efforts to abide with the measures, in order to reduce the spread of infection.

On-going Supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Following the successful management of the PPE situation locally through the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum, we have agreed with government that we will continue to receive free PPE from the Department of Health and Social Care until 31 March 2021. This PPE will help to ensure Lincolnshire County Council (LCC), Social Care Teams, Education Services and other Key Services can continue to deliver

services to people and communities across Lincolnshire. Alongside the 50,000 items received each week we also hold a stockpile of approximately 2 million items of PPE to support agencies through the winter and in the event of local outbreaks. The management of this is being undertaken in partnership with NRS, our community equipment service provider.

Mental Wellbeing Webinar

The challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic have brought the importance of Mental Health and Wellbeing into even sharper focus. For many, it has left them unable to see friends and family or to exercise and take part in activities that keep them healthy. On 12 October 2020, we held a Mental Health Webinar to highlight the importance of Mental Wellbeing. Along with Health and Voluntary Sector Partners, we outlined the Support Services in place to promote Mental Health and Wellbeing.

We want to ensure the support is there to stop people from falling into serious mental health difficulties and needing even more intense support further down the line. A good mind and body leads to a happy and healthy life where people can succeed in what they want to do.

The Mental Health webinar was recorded and is available through the LCC website.

Falls Partnership

The need for urgent care for some of our more vulnerable people has not abated whilst we have been managing life with Covid-19. I am really pleased to announce that an initiative, driven by the Council, to improve the speed and quality of urgent services' response when people fall, has gone from strength to strength. An exciting partnership between us, the CCG, East Midlands Ambulance and LIVES has seen response times for residents who fall much improved with medical treatment being administered in the resident's home without the need to go off to hospital. This service has prevented hundreds of residents; we are working with the CCG to see if we can now mainstream this service.

Wellbeing Service

In recent months, following the end of the first national lockdown, the Wellbeing Service returned to its core business seeing referral numbers increase as Key Agencies such as GP's, Hospitals, Adult Care and other Support Services returned to business as usual. As a result the Wellbeing Service successfully supported 792 out of 801 referrals in quarter 2 of this year.

From the start of the second national lockdown on 5 November 2020, the Service again adapted, continuing to offer support remotely wherever possible and bringing in additional capacity with weekend working, to implement the Community Response Pathway. The Pathway starts with the Council's Customer Service Centre. The Wellbeing Service assesses needs and helps those without support networks to register for online supermarket deliveries, connecting them with Local Voluntary Groups and the NHS Volunteer Scheme. Once again, I am very proud of the working relationships which have enabled us to offer this support, notably with our District Council's and Voluntary Sector Partners.

Housing Related Support

I am pleased to report the new Housing Related Support (HRS) Service went live on 1 October 2020 despite the on-going Covid-19 pandemic. 'Framework' is the Lead Provider for the Service, working in Partnership with the Longhurst Group, National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NACRO) and The Salvation Army, delivering support to homeless people and people at risk of becoming homeless. The new contract will help ensure people are equipped with the skills needed to maintain a tenancy or home of their own in the long term.

The service has redefined eligibility criteria and a new triage process, with all referrals going through District Councils to ensure it compliments but does not duplicate their duties to prevent and alleviate homelessness. This ensures those who are most in need and will benefit from the service can access it. It is early days, in the contract but it seems the new service is working well.

ADULT SKILLS & FAMILY LEARNING

The Adult Skills & Family Learning Service continues to deliver good outcomes for its learners despite the on-going challenges of Covid-19. 2019/20 academic year data indicates the service worked with 5,744 learners despite much of the year being in lockdown.

The Construction and Security Courses developed in 2019/20 continues to be popular with learners in 20/21. Both these courses are delivered to groups of adults who had been in long term unemployment. The learners achieve their CSCS Card (Construction Skills Certification Scheme) and SIA Badges (the compulsory Security Guard Licence to Practice) to gain employment in Construction or the Security Sectors.

Further courses have been developed to assist the local care providers in training delivering in infection control; IT courses to meet skills gaps for Lincolnshire Police employees.

The key area of focus for the 2020/21 programme is to engage residents in learning, particularly in the area of furlough and redundancy in the current climate. At the heart of the programme is the focus on Economic Wellbeing aimed at helping participants boost their skills and get back into work.

Working in partnership with the Council's Highways Service, the Adult Learning Team are in discussion with Eurovia, who are building part of the Spalding Western Relief Road, to provide work experience and job opportunities for a number of unemployed residents, aged 19-24. This project will provide 6 unemployed learners with a Pre-Employment Training programme, a two-week work placement and a guaranteed job interview. The Pre-Employment Training Programme will allow the participants to gain 7 qualifications in construction based work skills, as well as a CSCS Card and work experience, so even if they aren't successful in gaining employment with Eurovia they will be better equipped to gain employment with other employers. Alongside the Pre-Employment Training Programme, Eurovia will provide

job placements through the Kick-start Scheme maximising Government Funding for the benefit of our unemployed young people. It is the intention that this project will be the forerunner of other similar joint working initiatives with the Highways Service, ensuring work experience and job opportunities are available for our unemployed residents through LCC contractual arrangements.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Partners in Practice

The Partners in Practice Programme brought together the Country's Leading Authorities, including LCC, to boost improvement in the Children's Services Sector. It was found to have had a significant positive impact in a recent evaluation by the Department for Education (DfE). The new Child and Family Assessment created by Lincolnshire PIP was highlighted as having improved practice and increased accountability and transparency, helping families feel more empowered. Our willingness to consult stakeholders and respond to feedback was cited as a critical factor in our success. The full evaluation report is available from the DfE website.

Children's Health

Throughout the pandemic, Health Visitors have continued to undertake home visits, and, with the re-opening of some Children Centres, are now offering clinic appointments to those that are eligible. In addition, they phone every family with a child aged 24-36 months to discuss their progress. Our Children and Young People's Nurses have continued to provide support for children with complex needs and for parents of school-aged children who are concerned about their child's Health and Wellbeing.

Support for Schools

Ahead of the autumn term, LCC offered guidance to schools on how best to support young people who might find a return to the classroom difficult. Feedback from the sector has resulted in the commissioning of the Recover Lincolnshire Programme, via Lincolnshire Teaching Schools Together, which offers a wide range of support, one to one support continues to be delivered virtually, and schools have been offered a number of virtual engagement opportunities.

Since the beginning of term, pupils' attendance has been over 90%, and is similar to previous years in many schools. Schools have worked closely with the Health Protection Team to put measures in place to keep pupils safe and minimise the impact of any confirmed cases. Where pupils are not able to attend school, they have been offered remote learning. I would like to thank schools for their hard work throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

Winter Grant Scheme

The County Council will work with the 7 District Councils, our Schools and other partner agencies to ensure the Winter Grant Scheme is delivered across the County, with the greatest focus on providing support to Lincolnshire children and families. Our work with schools will ensure that children who are eligible for Free School Meals will receive support over the Christmas period as part of this Grant Scheme. The Local Authority will work with Schools to ensure local arrangements are in place to support children and families in their communities. In addition we will work with our

District Councils to ensure that this funding is targeted to those individuals and families identified as most in need of financial support due to Covid-19 during the winter period.

Education Transport

Since the start of the autumn term, school transport has been provided to all entitled children that require it. There were only minor issues, mainly stemming from the very high number of applications received after term had started. Infection control measures appear to be working effectively, and a Government Grant has funded additional, temporary school transport where necessary. More broadly, there still remain significant funding pressures, mainly due to the increasing cost of transport and the challenging local market.

Lincolnshire Music Service

Lincolnshire Music Service returned to schools in September 2020. Covid-19 has led to new ways of working, such as the transfer of Orchestras, Bands and Choirs to a virtual platform and new partnerships with the Chineke! Orchestra and the Manchester video gaming Orchestra. Music Education Recovery guidance has been provided to every school.

Positive Futures and Youth and Community Development Team

A programme of activities did resume in September 2020, initially with community outreach sessions. However, to ensure safety, we have now moved towards working with young people on a one to one basis. Youth Centres in Skegness, Boston and North Hykeham will remain open for Targeted Sessions, and we are working closely with our leased Youth Centres to ensure they comply with Government Guidance. We plan to return to our conventional delivery model when it is possible.

Foster Friendly Scheme

In September, the Council became a Foster Friendly Employer. This means staff who are either a Foster Carer for the Council or wish to become a Foster Carer for the Council will receive additional annual leave to undertake duties in relation to their fostering role. A Project Team has been set up to encourage Local Businesses, Schools and Health Providers to become Foster Friendly Employers.

Supporting Our Foster Carers

Caring2Learn works with our Foster Carers and Schools to improve outcomes for our Children in Care and previously Looked After Children. We now have 21 Foster Carer Champions supporting 53 Fostering households and, since March, engagement with the support network has almost doubled. The Team are successfully using social media to bring people together, and working alongside colleagues, such as the Virtual School, Fostering, FAST and Early Help, to develop links and ensure everyone involved has the knowledge, skills and confidence to effectively promote educational achievement for our most vulnerable children and young people.