

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 17 September 2021

Statement from: Councillor Mrs S Woolley, Executive Councillor for NHS Liaison, Community Engagement, Registration and Coroners

NHS LIAISON

Lincolnshire Integrated Care System

I am sure colleagues will be aware that Lincolnshire's Integrated Care System (ICS) was approved by NHS England and Improvement (NHSE&I) on 1 April 2021, and subject to the Health and Care Bill currently going through Parliament, it will become statutory from April 2022. ICSs are partnerships of health and care organisations, local government and the voluntary sector aimed at delivering joined up care to improve population health, tackle health inequalities and enable the NHS to support broader social and economic development.

The development of the Lincolnshire ICS is moving at pace:

- Following approval at Council in May, the Lincolnshire Health and Wellbeing Board met on 22 June 2021, in its enhanced role, as the ICS Partnership Board.
- The Joint Executive Working Group (JWEG) have held a series of planning days to understand the needs of Lincolnshire's population, identify the system priorities and agree governance arrangements.
- A Strategic Plan for October 2021 – March 2024 is being developed with input from LCC and key partners
- Recruitment is underway to appoint a collaborative leader to chair the Lincolnshire ICS body.

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

I can report that, at the last meeting of the Lincolnshire Health and Wellbeing Board on 22 June 2021, the Board agreed proposals to redesign and republish Lincolnshire's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). The JSNA is an assessment of current and future health and wellbeing needs of the people of Lincolnshire. The current JSNA is made up of 34 topics and is currently available to view on the [Lincolnshire Research Observatory](#).

Over the next 18 months the JSNA will be reviewed and will move away from the current topic structure to one based on a "life course" model constructed around the following headings:

- Start Well
- Live Well
- Age Well

It is anticipated the new JSNA will be published by March 2023.

Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) 2022

There is a statutory requirement for the Lincolnshire Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) to publish a PNA every three years. It was due to be republished by April 2021 but, due to

Covid-19, last year the Government announced this requirement was suspended to April 2022. With the on-going demands of the pandemic on the health and care system, the suspension has been extended until October 2022. In addition, the national regulations are being updated to reflect this change and updated guidance will be published shortly on the revised process for renewing the PNA.

COMMUNITY ENAGEMENT

Connect to Support

A new, searchable directory, of community assets in Lincolnshire has been added to the Connect to Support Lincolnshire (CTSL) website as part of the Joint Strategic Asset Assessment (JSAA) activity, enabling people to search for venues, buildings and facilities in the county that could be used to host groups, events, and activities. In addition, a new section called “Volunteering and Community” will shortly be added to the Information and Advice area, providing guidance and resources for people interested in volunteering.

The directory search function on the site has been developed to now include an interactive map, helping people to find providers, services and groups in their area. Tiles on the homepage also now provide a direct link to our Mental Health and Covid-19 information pages. Further developments over the next few months will include an improved “My Favourites” booklet function and a CTSL mobile app.

Council's engagement activities

Between 1 April 2021 and 31 July 2021 the Engagement team supported 57 engagement activities carried out by services across the council. This includes two consultations, 42 public and wider stakeholder engagements and 13 internal engagements, with 26 activities being supported at the time of writing this update. To date, these activities have engaged over 9,165 residents, visitors and organisations (note this refers to electronic representations and does not include face to face participation during a number of workshops and targeted conversations with infrastructure organisations and representatives’ networks that were held during this period).

The Engagement team are introducing a new forward looking engagement plan to provide a roadmap of engagement and consultation for the year ahead. This will enable proactive and well planned approach and will ensure they can contribute fully to ensuring project success. Conversations with Directorate Leadership Teams about engagement and a need for more strategic forward planning are already in progress.

The Council now has a new online engagement platform called Let’s Talk Lincolnshire. This is an exciting new venture that sets the stage for sustained participation by transforming the ways we can engage and reach out to wider audiences using a suite of engagement tools. These tools will be available to teams in service areas to carry out engagement in new ways moving beyond traditional surveys. The platform allows for better intelligence, data analysis and reporting and will contribute to better decisions being made. As well as building the size and scope of our audience for engagement through the new platform, the team are developing lists of stakeholder groups, representatives’ networks and linkages to datasets held by others to ensure the right audiences can be effectively reached.

County Views Citizens' Panel

The Engagement team has led the development of a new citizens' panel, known as County Views. It is in place to establish what residents value most and where we can improve services. Panel members take part in a residents' survey and may also be invited to take part in a rolling programme of surveys, focus groups and workshops. This calendar year has seen two surveys asking about views on unpaid carers and climate change. A promotional programme to raise the panel's profile and enhance representation from across Greater Lincolnshire is ongoing. Since its launch in August 2020, the panel has grown to 451 members.

Funding portal

Content review and updates

Since May 2021 a major review of the Lincolnshire Funding Portal has been taking place in preparation for possible renewal of the contract in April 2022.

There are two areas on the website that provide a space for Lincolnshire based funders, infrastructure organisations and Local Authorities to provide relevant information on the type of grants and funding they have available and/or the funding support service they provide for community groups and organisations. We are in the process of contacting all relevant organisations and the content on these pages is in the process of being updated.

Accessibility

An accessibility test has also been carried out to ensure the website is accessible to all users. This includes people with disabilities who use assistive technology to access the internet, as well as people who may experience other obstacles in accessing websites.

Statistical data

In order to evaluate the performance of the Lincolnshire Funding Portal, we have devised a new survey which will be sent out monthly to registered users, specifically those that have logged in to use the Lincolnshire Funding Portal in the previous month to help us assess user experience.

Statistics for the Lincolnshire Funding Portal from April 2021 to July 2021

During April 2021 to July 2021 numbers and demand remained high for the Lincolnshire Funding Portal including the number of funding searches.

Month	Number of unique registered users who logged into the site (incl. those from out of county)	Increase % from the same month in the year before	Number of funding searches	Number of wards in Lincolnshire with enquiries
April 2021	400 (54)	56.9%	136	121
May 2021	356 (40)	34.3%	125	134
June 2021	350 (51)	29.6%	106	119
July 2021	294 (41)	-6.7%	140	121

Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils (LALC)

The year of remote meetings has now passed; lots of councils have embraced the use of technology, others have been glad to get back together. Lots of councils have given their views to the MHCLG call for evidence, so have to wait and see what long-term options are made available. As far as LALC is concerned, Zoom will be one of the ways forward. The benefits to LALC staff and course participants far outweigh the disadvantages of connection problems. Remote training removes the need for long journeys across the county, it gives more flexibility in when to hold courses, and it allows resources to be shared easily.

LALC will still continue to hold some training sessions and meetings face-to-face. It is important to keep the personal contact where possible. Networking is still a much-needed and invaluable part of what they do. One of the first events will be a physical CiLCA catch up for the current cohort of candidates in September.

The AGM will be held on 6th October at the Bentley Hotel, South Hykeham.

Voluntary Centre Services (VCS) & Community and Voluntary Sector Engagement (CVSE) Recovery Group

Voluntary Centre Services and Lincolnshire CVS are the county's two generic infrastructure organisations, providing a range of support to community and voluntary sector organisations including volunteering development, funding advice, capacity building and specific programmes supporting individuals such as the Social Prescribing service and the Greater Lincolnshire MOVE Project.

Colleagues will be very aware of the enormous contribution made to all our communities by individual volunteers, small community groups and larger voluntary sector organisations throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. The CVSE Recovery Group brings together LCC, District Councils, NHS and Voluntary Sector organisations to ensure on-going support to individuals and to continue to supply volunteers to vaccination centres, but also to build on relationships and services for the future. This includes developing a single digital platform for volunteer deployment, understanding the sustainability of the sector for the future and the opportunities for co-commissioning services. This work is enabling us to deliver key elements of our Community Engagement Strategy.

Supporting Volunteering

Volunteers have been a vital part of the response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and the aim has been to help both organisations and members of the public wishing to volunteer with safe and practical advice and guidance; to minimise the spread of coronavirus and keep volunteers safe.

As their role in recruiting volunteers for the Covid-19 vaccination programme is starting to reduce and Covid-19 restrictions are starting to ease, the range of volunteering opportunities are now increasing and local groups and charities are starting to consider their needs over the next phase of recovery.

During the quarter they have supported 378 volunteers to access volunteering opportunities including 114 that continue to volunteer on a regular basis at the Covid-19 vaccination site at Ruston's in Lincoln.

Employer Supported Volunteering (ESV)

ESV is an aspect of volunteering that has understandably taken a back seat over the last year but has recently started positive discussions with RAF Waddington with a view to establishing an ESV opportunity with the Sleaford Station (East Midlands Railway).

Online training portal

The online training platform continues to be popular with 37 new volunteers accessing training within the quarter. The most popular courses were Equality & Diversity, Autism Awareness, GDPR, Making Every Contact Count (Loneliness & isolation) and Safeguarding Awareness.

Support for local groups and organisations

With the pandemic severely impacting local groups, charities and organisations in different ways, they have adapted our services to enable us to help local groups and organisations navigate the ongoing challenges and support the recovery of the community and voluntary sector as lockdown measures continue to fluctuate.

For many groups this means finding new ways of operating and delivering services, whilst providing ongoing support to their staff, volunteers, and clients. They anticipate there to be a period of significant change for the sector as the pandemic continues to have a catastrophic effect on those services that have been needed more than ever.

VCS has adapted their support to local groups and organisations with advice, information and resources to help in delivering their vital services during these challenging times and providing support to their volunteers. During the first quarter of 2021-22, they have supported 334 organisations across Lincolnshire with:

- Practical advice and resources
- Online forums, coffee mornings and regular networking opportunities
- Funding advice
- Funding readiness online training and support
- Support to develop new roles and recruit volunteers
- Advice and support with DBS checks
- Online training platform for their volunteers

Although they have been unable to deliver any face to face training or networking events due to the pandemic, they have held our usual Voluntary Sector Forums, Volunteer Co-ordinator Forums and new monthly coffee mornings online, as well as a series of marketing workshops.

Citizens Advice Lincolnshire (CAL) Quarter 1 update

Citizens Advice Lincolnshire (CAL) provides free, impartial and confidential advice, information and support on a wide range of practical and civil legal issues such as debt,

benefits, employment and housing to Lincolnshire residents. CAL is a consortium of four independent local charities; Citizens Advice Lindsey, Citizens Advice Lincoln, Citizens Advice South Lincolnshire and Citizens Advice Mid Lincolnshire.

Demand for advice services remains high, with increases in key areas including welfare benefits appeals support and a steady increase in debt referrals.

As they begin to move out of lockdown CAL are examining the best ways to embed the successful developments they have made during the pandemic with the need to ensure their services are accessible to all. They are examining the strengths and weaknesses of different delivery models in terms of different communities – what may work for the residents of Lincoln may not work for the residents of rural West Lindsey for example.

During this quarter the service:

- Worked with 2,515 people, through the core service, and an additional 1,130 through funded projects totalling 3,645 people supported across the county
- Dealt with 4,014 issues and carried out 4,118 activities through core service alone, totalling 15,012 issues across all projects. People are presenting to CAL with on average 3 or 4 issues per person
- Advised on £603,029 worth of debt through core service alone, with a total of £1,869,742 of specialist debt support

During the reporting quarter CAL supported 745 clients with issues related to Universal Credit, with 328 of these being supported through the Help to Claim service.

Additionally, they have supported 369 clients on issues related to transitional benefits. The service is anticipating a spike in demand for support related to Universal Credit as protective measures put in place during the pandemic end and the financial consequences of the pandemic really begin to hit.

Benefits, Tax Credits and Universal Credit consistently remain the key advice areas and are continuing to see an increase in requests for support through the appeals process. These are complex and resource intensive cases and, following locally conducted research, CAL have highlighted they are the only service that provide this level of support to the general population.

CAL are continuing to see comparatively low numbers of debt clients approaching them for support, this is in line with national trends not just from Citizens Advice but other providers. They are beginning to see a steady increase in numbers and, as furlough comes to an end, the financial impact on businesses really hits and recovery of debts begins again in earnest, this demand will increase.

Housing issues are coming to the fore especially with the changes around section 21 notices, e.g. a landlord must give at least 4 months' notice under a Section 21 Notice to terminate an assured shorthold tenancy for any notices served on or after 1 June. This period has been reduced from the current requirement of 6 months' notice. This restriction will remain in place until 30 September 2021 (unless extended).

CAL have again seen a high number of issues classified as 'other', these issues are primarily related to supporting clients to access foodbanks, fuel vouchers and supporting clients to access other charitable support.

REGISTRATION AND CORONERS

Registration & Celebratory

The Registration Service continues to be heavily impacted by the pandemic during 2021. The service has remained open to the public throughout the year for births and death appointments; however national restrictions around weddings and civil partnerships ceremonies resulted in a severely reduced offering to the public for the first six months of 2021. As restrictions have now been lifted, the service is faced with the challenge of recovery and managing the demand for ceremonies is extremely difficult.

Birth registration appointments have largely been unaffected. Registrations have taken place throughout the year with all registrations being conducted face to face in Covid secure environments. As we moved through the year we have experienced a rise in requests for birth registrations with current demand for appointments remaining very high.

Death registrations remained a priority during 2021. The service continues to use the easements contained within the Coronavirus Act, with all death registrations undertaken via telephone. All medical certificates of cause of death (MCCDs) are now triaged by a lead registrar providing greater oversight and management of the process. We continue to engage with hospitals, bereavement centres, GP surgeries, nursing homes and funeral directors to ensure deaths are registered in a timely manner

Weddings & civil partnerships continued to be greatly impacted by restrictions during 2021, uncertainty and a lack of clarity resulted in increased volumes of customer contact putting huge pressure on the service. As we moved through the Government's roadmap with restrictions on ceremonies lifted, weddings and civil partnerships returned to normal with no limits on attendees or the duration of the event.

The service is currently faced with unprecedented demand for weddings and managing this demand is extremely challenging due to the large number of ceremonies deferred in 2020/21. To meet this demand and to increase the number of ceremonies the service can deliver, a recruitment exercise for new celebrant staff has been undertaken.

Citizenship ceremonies have taken place virtually during 2021 via the Home Office approved virtual ceremony (Microsoft Teams) option. This has been vital in providing continuity of service during lockdown and periods of heightened restrictions. Following the lifting of restrictions face to face group citizenship ceremonies recommenced in July.

Looking ahead, the Registration Service is focused on improving its digital offering. An enhanced customer offering will be introduced later this year allowing customers to self-serve for appointment bookings and to pay for services in advance online.

Coroner's

The Coroner's Service remains a key part of the death management process and has continued to operate throughout the pandemic. The service has experienced an increase in the number of referrals going to inquest. Along with this increase, the complexity and the information required to take a case to inquest has placed extra pressure on the service.

The service has recently commenced a transformation programme to modernise and change how it operates, with the aim of becoming a more digital and cost effective service. Currently the service is split in two; the Referrals team, who work remotely and deal with initial referrals from GPs, Hospitals, Police, EMAS and investigate cases that are likely to be a natural death, and secondly the Inquest team, who investigate all unnatural deaths.

The service will be moving out of its current accommodation at Lindum Road and relocating to Myle Cross later this year. The service currently has accommodation constraints and incurs large hire costs for court space at external venues. This move will be permanent and will provide the service with dedicated court rooms to hold jury inquests which the Senior Coroner plans to start holding from October. In addition, the co-locating of staff will ensure a more efficient and cost effective service is in place.

The Chief Coroner has directed that smaller coronial areas across the country need to merge, which is the case for North and North East Lincolnshire Coroner's Service. Lincolnshire has drawn up a business case to merge and create a Greater Lincolnshire Coroner's Service, the bid will be submitted to the Chief Coroner who will ultimately make the decision. If the bid is successful, the service would become the largest coronial area in England and Wales by area and be in the top ten of coronial areas by volume of death referrals with 5,000 referrals a year.