

# Adult Social Care Winter Plan 2020/21



milton keynes council



## Introduction

In Milton Keynes we have prioritised the support to our adult social care providers and are committed to the delivery of safe, sustainable care throughout the winter months.

In the context of the Covid 19 pandemic this has never been more important. We continue to see from all our social care providers a collective resilience to the unprecedented situation we are currently in. As with all local authority areas, Milton Keynes has a wide range of service provision including 47 care homes, over 70 home care services, 11 supported living services and 14 day care providers.

We have incorporated into our winter plan the requirements from the recently published DHSC adult social care winter plan<sup>1</sup> and have agreed its content with NHS partners.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-social-care-coronavirus-covid-19-winter-plan-2020-to-2021/adult-social-care-our-covid-19-winter-plan-2020-to-2021>

## Winter planning in Milton Keynes

Over recent years the impact of winter in Milton Keynes has been widely felt across the social care and health system. Whilst the weather has tended to be mild over recent years, the pressure on services has not lessened and has at times increased in intensity.

As part of our winter preparedness there are expectations across all service areas that business continuity plans will be available, up to date and serve as a guide for managers and staff to work to and ensure services continue to function. Our plans take into account the weather, illness, working arrangements during seasonal holidays, alternative accommodation, use of technology etc. During the pandemic our business continuity plans were enacted to ensure services were maintained. The lesson learned have help refine further our winter plans.

### Assessment services

Working with colleagues in the hospital and clinical settings, our assessment services are very responsive to requirements of health care services. We have focussed our attention on ensuring the smooth discharge of patients to community settings. Our assessment teams either in the community or the hospital are structured as follows:

- Eight social workers are based in the hospital as part of the integrated hospital discharge team, avoiding patient delayed discharges and exposure to infections. Collaborating with the clinical teams, they identify those needing input and support to be discharged.
- A team of eight social care professionals work in the community to assess people discharged into recuperation and reablement services.
- Social workers will provide a seven-day support to the hospital to promote discharges over the winter.
- Face to face contact with individuals has been reduced to maintain infection control, utilising technology as required.

### Council provider services

Council colleagues working in provider services are at the front line of care and support. They have become experienced in finding innovative ways to deliver services in the varying winter conditions we have seen over the years. For example, in previous years home care staff have been able to source 4x4 vehicles and drivers to enable service delivery in inclement weather.

- Business continuity plans are in place to ensure the ongoing provision of internal home care, reablement, occupational therapy, day care, laundry, sheltered housing and the community alarm service.
- Measures are in place to rationalise and prioritise work e.g. to pool staff and combine or reduce home visits to manage the most critical of service users.

- Additional capacity for night visits both planned and unplanned is available to avoid hospital admission.
- The rapid response carer service provides emergency cover.

### Commissioned services

Throughout the pandemic we have worked closely with partners and colleagues including Public Health England, Public Health, Milton Keynes Clinical Commissioning Group (MKCCG) and Emergency Planning to ensure ongoing support for care providers. This was invaluable in relation to sharing intelligence, good practice, minimising duplication and developing solutions to issues. A number of areas are now being prioritised with externally commissioned services:

- There will be an ongoing liaison with all adult social care providers to ensure that their business continuity plans are up to date and that they are able to continue to provide services. Areas of importance include care home provision, home care services, meals on wheels and community equipment services. Each service is risk assessed and a RAG rating has been developed to identify those requiring additional support and monitoring. This will use criteria such as staffing levels, PPE availability, the health status of service users etc.
- Information guidance and advice are offered. This includes ongoing distribution of information and guidance from DHSC, NHS and Public Health.
- Plans are in place to ensure that the community equipment service is able to maintain provision. Our provider continues to operate under their existing business continuity plan ensuring delivery continues during inclement weather and seasonal staff shortages and any impact from Covid 19.
- An independent care home assessor has been commissioned by MKC to support the hospital discharge process. They work closely with care homes and assess on their behalf allowing for an efficient discharge process.

## Preventing and controlling the spread of infection

The Council continues to work closely with the Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG) infection control team to ensure that care homes and the wider care sector receive timely and appropriate advice, guidance and training. Weekly meetings take place enabling suitable information sharing and appropriate actions are taken e.g. additional training

### **Managing staff movement**

- We have successfully distributed the Infection Control Fund and continue to oversee the grant conditions including staff movement, actively following up where issues may arise
- We continue to provide vital support and guidance to limit Covid 19 infection
- With both our internal home care services and our externally commissioned providers we have developed geographical based rounds to both improve continuity of care and limit travelling distances

### **Capacity Tracker**

We continue to monitor the use of the Capacity Tracker on a daily basis. We identify concerns with our service providers and maintain regular contact to promptly address issues, such as staff movement.

### **PPE**

Throughout the pandemic we continue to support social care providers with additional PPE, information, advice and guidance

We have plans in place to ensure that we maintain adequate supplies of PPE in our internal provider services. In relation to our commissioned services we are strongly encouraging providers to also maintain adequate supplies. We will also maintain links with our Local Resilience Forum.

### **Covid 19 testing**

- All our internal services have had the track and trace app downloaded on to their staff mobile phones. We have asked and encouraged all our externally commissioned providers to do the same
- We continue to work closely with our CCG to ensure good access to Pillar One Testing through our Urgent Care Centre

- All individuals transferring into care homes or sheltered accommodation are tested and results received beforehand to ensure the appropriate steps can be taken e.g. access to a winter discharge designated setting
- Our multi-agency Care Home Group is key to ensuring any specific needs regarding testing, infection prevention and control are addressed

### **Flu vaccination**

- As part of our MK Together partnership we have established a multi-agency Tasking Group to coordinate and promote the flu vaccination as widely as possible within the local area. This includes the vaccination for staff and residents in care homes.

A wide ranging communication campaign has been delivered, to encourage all front line staff in health and social care services to take up the offer of a flu vaccination. We have worked in partnership with a local pharmacy group to provide these vaccinations for staff.

## Collaboration across health and social care

We have developed a strong multi agency approach in Milton Keynes. A number of partnership cells have been established to deliver priorities during the pandemic and these have been maintained for the onset of winter. Our Care Home Group in particular has been developed to ensure that strategically and operationally a response is available in managing system issues. It meets weekly and has already focused on ensuring that infection control is overseen and managed through health, social care and public health expertise.

### **Safe discharge from NHS settings and preventing avoidable admissions**

- Through the use of our Better Care Fund the Council and CCG have a well established agreement to fund our recuperation pathway. This focusses on the smooth discharge of patients to community settings, and is based upon a discharge to assess model. We have expanded our provision to include:
  - 16 care home beds for recuperation
  - A home care service for recuperation at home
  - Two flats in a sheltered housing unit for more independent service users
  - In addition high dependency service users can also be discharged into our Seacole virtual hospital, where more intensive therapeutic support can be provided. Seacole provides up to 58 community beds.
- The Council's Head of Access, Assessment, Review and Hospital Discharge is the Executive Lead for the delivery of the discharge to assess model
- The Council and CCG are working together to manage outstanding and new CHC assessments, ensuring their completion in a timely manner. Additional Council resources have been allocated to meet the demand. Weekly meetings between partners discuss progress and address any issues
- The Council has commissioned four isolation beds in a local care home. This is to ensure that Covid 19 positive care home residents, discharged from hospital, can safely isolate in an alternative winter discharge designated setting

### **Technology and digital support**

- The Council in partnership with NHS colleagues have well developed Integrated Community Support Teams (ICST's). These operate across seven Primary Care Networks with a multi-disciplinary approach to health and social care needs, sharing the same technology and digital solutions

## Supporting those who receive care, the workforce and carers

### Visiting care homes

The Director of Public Health has recently issued additional guidance on visiting to care homes. This will be reviewed on a regular basis in light of local incidence rates of Covid 19 and other infections. The Council continues to work closely with the CCG's infection control team to ensure that care homes and the wider care sector receive timely and appropriate advice, guidance and training.

### Direct Payments

- People in receipt of Direct Payments are reviewed every six months, which has continued during the pandemic. This ensures awareness of available support services, and a regular link with the Council's adult social services. During the pandemic even more flexibility of the use of Direct Payments was encouraged due to the limitations on available service provision. We will continue to take a flexible approach during the winter period, working closely with our commissioned Direct Payment Support Service.

### Support for unpaid carers

- The Council undertakes carer reviews to ensure they are suitably supported. Offers of support may be through: the Council commissioning respite services; Carers MK, our carers support service, providing information, advice and guidance; or through other organisations such as Age UK who offer other practical support such as a sitting service
- The Council has and continues to work closely with day care providers to safely provide support to service users. This is a blended approach and includes safe re-opening, virtual/digital services and one to one service delivery.

### Care Act easements

The Council continues to take heed of Care Act easements, although this has not been required to date. We have and continue to work closely with NHS partners, including CHC and hospital discharge co-ordinators, to ensure appropriate care and support is well planned and agreed

### Supporting the workforce

#### Training

The Council continues to offer a wide range of training opportunities for both our internal service provision and our externally commissioned services. We have a well established Learning and Development team to facilitate this.

- Guidance regarding the free induction training offer has been circulated to all our service providers. They have been suitably encouraged to utilise it.

### Wellbeing

In relation to the wellbeing of the workforce we have made strenuous efforts to ensure this is prioritised. As a Council we have:

- Implemented agile and home working where possible
- Maintained throughout the pandemic and going forward our occupational health provision
- Continued to provide our Employee Assistance programme offering counselling, bereavement support, health related advice from qualified clinicians, legal information support
- Promoted the use of health and wellbeing champions
- Ensured that therapeutic support from our local IAPT is well known and available to all service providers

### Capacity

- In the Council's own internal services, we have developed a pool of relief staff to support flexible working during the winter period.
- We continue to support providers to complete the Capacity Tracker and update their workforce data set.

### Social work and professional leadership

- We continue to ensure that we apply legislative and strength based frameworks.
- Our assessment processes are addressing inequalities and deprivation, particularly in relation to health and social care.
- Our Quality Performance Framework is being reviewed in light of Covid 19 and the onset of winter. We have already updated our supervision processes.
- We have continued to maintain excellent professional relationships across our health and social care system. Weekly health and social care leadership meetings are well established and there are very effective joined up working arrangements across acute care and all our community services.
- Our safeguarding practices are well supported and processes and guidance regularly reviewed to ensure that we continue to be person-led and outcome focussed. We are currently reviewing safeguarding concerns that have arisen during the pandemic, including our workforce capacity as part of our business continuity plan.

## Supporting the system

### Funding

We are continuing to manage the extended Infection Control Fund, and have systems in place to ensure regular reporting.

### Market and provider sustainability

The Council has close links with the social care market and well developed relationships. These relationships if anything have been strengthened during the pandemic. During the pandemic our service providers swiftly adapted to maintain delivery – all our CQC registered services continued their provision without interruption.

We delivered a number of financial support initiatives:

- 10% fee increase over three months for care homes
- Guaranteed payments for home care providers for three months
- Guaranteed payments to day care providers
- Additional PPE grants

During the winter period, with appropriate and sufficient financial support, we will continue to review and where necessary intervene to ensure service sustainability. We have already committed to increasing the funding of our commissioned home care services during the winter period. This is due to commence in November and end in March 2021. As mentioned above we have also increased our investment in our recuperation pathway to ensure suitable and sufficient step down facilities.

## Conclusion

Milton Keynes Council has well established winter plans to maintain the delivery of essential services. However, the impact of both winter and Covid 19 will require close monitoring to identify pressure on services, taking the appropriate action as required. We will continue to do this in partnership with other agencies and colleagues.