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| <b>Title of meeting:</b> | Health, Wellbeing & Social Care Decision Meeting    |
| <b>Subject:</b>          | Adult Social Care Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic |
| <b>Date of meeting:</b>  | 15 March 2021                                       |
| <b>Report by:</b>        | Andy Biddle   |
| <b>Wards affected:</b>   | All   |

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**1. Requested by**

**2. Purpose**

Cllr Winnington has requested an update to the Adult Social Care, (ASC) response to the COVID-19 Pandemic that was presented to the Health, Wellbeing & Social Care Portfolio meeting in September 2020.

This report will summarise some of the key issues and work undertaken by ASC in conjunction with Health & Care Portsmouth colleagues in relation to COVID-19, from September 2020 to February 2021.

**3. Information Requested**

**Context**

The focus for the ASC response to COVID-19 has been governed by the release of government guidance, as adult social care in England is governed by statutory duties contained in the Care Act 2014, Mental Health Act 2007 and Mental Capacity Act 2005.

When Portsmouth City Council, (PCC) moved to business critical activities in March 2020 ASC reduced or closed non-critical services and redeployed staff to support critical services both in PCC and the independent care sector. When the national alert status changed and lockdown measures were eased, in common with other Council services, ASC re-introduced those services that were either partially or fully closed. With the national lock down in November 2020 and subsequent lockdown in December 2020, ASC reduced day service provision, but maintained all other services. Day Service provision is again expanding with the lower rate of community infection, standard Infection Prevention & Control, (IPC) measures, vaccination and regular testing.

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### **Priorities**

#### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The City Council maintains a strategic reserve of PPE for use in critical services. As per the Adult Social Care Action Plan published in 2020, the government began to supply COVID-19 associated PPE to the social care sector and it has been agreed that this will be extended to July 2021.

#### Hospital Discharge

As per government guidance on Hospital discharge, (published in March 2020, updated in August 2020) ASC continues to work in partnership with Solent NHS Trust, (Solent) Portsmouth Clinical Commissioning Group, (PCCG) and Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust, (PHU) to discharge people from hospital in a timely way. In September 2020, Solent and ASC agreed a single 'Senior Responsible Officer' (SRO) for discharge with the mandate to direct both organisations staff and with the support of PCCG. This role has been successful in joining up the teams and individuals working to achieve discharge in Portsmouth.

Since November 2020 we have seen a significant increase in the number of people who are 'Medically Fit For Discharge' (MFFD) in our local Hospital. This is consistent with the higher number of people being admitted to Hospital with COVID-19 and the need to discharge people as soon as possible to maintain critical care. Despite this increase, we have consistently seen the average numbers of people who are MFFD sustained at 50% less than that of March 2020. We continue to work with partners in the NHS to discharge people safely, being flexible with care provision outside of hospital.

#### Care Environments

One of the most significant impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the effect of the virus on care homes. Following a period of no outbreaks in PCC managed and run care homes, in January 2021 there was an outbreak in Shearwater. The focus on Infection Prevention and Control, (IPC) measures, (following government/Public Health England guidance) contained the outbreak and one resident admitted to hospital was subsequently discharged back to Shearwater.

Since December 2020, there have been a number of outbreaks in non-PCC care home and supported living settings in the city. ASC, PCCG and Solent colleagues have monitored these situations, organised staffing support where required and provided advice and support to care providers. As of February 2021, we are seeing less outbreaks and staffing pressures in the city. I would like to express my gratitude to all of our colleagues in Health & Care Portsmouth for all of their work in helping people with care and support needs stay safe and well throughout this time. The willingness of people to work flexibly has been much appreciated.

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Whilst the expectation, both nationally and locally, is that most people will be discharged home, with some requiring support, there is a need for a smaller number of people to access a bedded facility, either for intermediate care or before returning to their care home. In partnership with PCCG, ASC set up the Gunwharf unit as a 'designated setting' supporting people who are COVID-19 positive on discharge from hospital who need a temporary placement.

In addition to this unit, in January 2021, ASC changed bed based rehabilitation and the staff at the Victory Unit moved to the Southsea Unit at Harry Sotnick House. This enabled a Discharge to Assess, (D2A) unit for people coming out of hospital who were not COVID-19 positive. The length of stay was reduced which created capacity to help more people move out of Hospital. Moving from one environment to another and opening up to new admissions was completed in nine days by the staff team and managers and was a significant achievement.

Whilst there is an ambition to establish a permanent Discharge to Assess, (D2A) unit on this site, to ensure that people are able to make a decision about care support needs outside of hospital, permanent funding has not yet been secured to do this. This is likely to be the subject of a cabinet paper in the autumn.

### Financial Support

The central government support allocated to the care sector since March 2020 in Portsmouth has consisted of two tranches of the 'Infection Control Grant'; the Rapid Testing Grant and the 'Workforce Grant'. As of February 2021, £3,076,326 has been directly distributed to the sector in Portsmouth via the Council.

In addition, Portsmouth City Council has supported the sector, funding PPE and increased staffing, (prior to government funding) and a 'Minimum Income Guarantee' scheme. These funding streams amounted to an additional £1,327,000 for the care sector in Portsmouth.

From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020, many people discharged have a period of care and rehabilitation provided for up to six weeks, funded by the NHS, ('Scheme 2') until an assessment for long-term care is undertaken. This has contributed to other measures enabling rapid discharge from hospital. A recent letter from the Department for Health & Social Care has informed that this funding will cease on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. Discussion with the Department continues around the impact of this on discharge and locally PCCG and ASC colleagues are planning for the scheme change.

It is likely that the after effects of the pandemic will see an increased level of care and support need that will have to be met by PCC. ASC has not seen the additional funding it needs to meet service demand, (Local Government Association estimated a £3.6 billion funding gap in adult social care by 2025). We have also not seen a clear plan for a sustainable social care sector and councils are therefore forced to make difficult decisions

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about where to allocate funding. The impact to the Council's income from social care charges, partly mitigated by Scheme 2 will need further consideration.

Testing

Testing for COVID-19 was an emergent issue throughout the pandemic. The range of testing now available locally includes an option at Queen Alexandra Hospital and, recently the asymptomatic community testing facility at Portsmouth Guildhall. In addition to this, government guidance and testing capacity has expanded since September 2020. Care Homes, domiciliary care agencies, supported living settings and day service settings are now all part of a regular testing programme for staff and people with care and support needs. We also anticipate an announcement on testing for Personal Assistants directly employed by people in receipt of a Direct Payment.

Vaccination

In December 2020, COVID-19 vaccinations commenced for the larger care homes, progressing in early January 2021 to smaller care homes. Working with PCCG colleagues, ASC have been ensuring that, where vaccinations could not take place due to outbreaks, follow up happened at a suitable time to vaccinate. Working with Public Health and PHU colleagues, ASC have supported vaccination for social care front line staff in PCC and across the city and have prepared for sharing information around unpaid carers to ensure this essential group can receive vaccination. Extra Care and supported living settings have also received vaccination.

Sadly, across the city we have seen further deaths due to COVID-19 across the range of services commissioned by ASC. It is not possible to convey how deeply this affects people with care and support needs and their families and staff employed in health and care environments. All organisations are considering the range of support they offer and this is being considered at an Integrated Care Partnership, (ICP) level and more widely in the Hampshire & Isle Of Wight system with a focus on sharing good practice.

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Signed by (Director)

**Appendices:**

**Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

| Title of document | Location |
|-------------------|----------|
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