



By email:

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Dear Minister

Re: Hampshire Care Home Support Plan

This letter sets out the actions and support provided to the adult social care sector across Hampshire, with particular focus on the care home sector in light of recent Ministerial letters and Government direction relating to the grant guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-support-for-care-homes>) issued on 22nd May. However, this letter also provides an overview of the much more detailed and extensive work taking place across the whole sector in response to Covid19.

This response has been led by Hampshire County Council (HCC) but has been compiled jointly with all Hampshire CCGs, and strongly reflects the work and focus of the wider Integrated Care System in the county, on the basis of working collaboratively and co-operatively across the sector. Representatives from a range of key partners and stakeholders have helped shape the availability of the support being provided through the joint commissioning of the local authority and NHS partners. Specifically informing this response have been the Director of Adult Social Care, Director of Public Health for Hampshire, HCC senior officers, Hampshire CCG Partnership, wider NHS partners, Hampshire Care Association, local CQC representatives and HealthWatch Hampshire. Broader views of service user representatives and others, including Elected Members and clinicians, have also been sought in drafting this response. As we proceed forward, we will continue to ensure the views and experiences of people using services, their families, staff and provider organisations inform our collective response. We will do this through continued co-production and support through HealthWatch Hampshire and other key partners.

Chief Executive
John Coughlan CBE

Firstly, I wish to formally recognise the impact of Covid19 on all sections of our community: residents, their families and all staff working in social care, health and associated organisations. The progression of this terrible disease has had significant and horrendous consequences upon all people, but especially those who are particularly vulnerable. The fortitude of residents, their families and the exceptional staff who are providing vital care and support, often with scant regard to their own welfare, has been and continues to be nothing short of amazing and humbling. My colleagues and I want to recognise their achievements in this letter, but also the impacts and consequences the pandemic and the ensuing lockdown will have had. Whilst we are now, positively, seeing the incidence of Covid19 reducing across all care settings, the consequences and legacy will long be with us, across all our communities for some time to come. Family and individual distress and the need to restore services to some form of normality are pressing needs and collectively we will be working to ensure this in the coming weeks and beyond.

I also want to recognise and place on record that whilst Government financial support received in response to Covid19 is extremely welcome and is subject to closer consideration later in this letter, the financial challenges faced by social care in advance of the pandemic were already at a critical point. Now more than ever a long-term funding solution must be sought. Short-term financial support must be translated into long-term sustainability of the care sector. In Hampshire some 60% of the care sector is funded through individuals paying the full-cost of their care and the very fabric of the whole sector is now under threat in the medium to longer term without a comprehensive funding settlement. Collectively and at the direction of our local political leaders we have acted quickly to ensure this funding support is made available as quickly as possible. But we must make the point here that after this extraordinary collective the nation must now support this sector properly into the future.

Through our previously existing joint arrangements across the Hampshire system (e.g. development of a Quality Strategy overseen by the Quality Board, regular strategic meetings between CQC, CCGs and LA and joint quality monitoring and support arrangements between LA and NHS teams) we believe we had good and carefully co-constructed foundations on which to build in order to respond to Covid19. Critical to the ongoing resilience, sustainability and continuing safety of the support to people across Hampshire will be working collaboratively to develop outcomes and responding to emerging needs. We will continue to develop our shared strategic approach and collective commitment to support this approach.

Work taking place across Hampshire

The cross organisational group which was established at the very early stages of the pandemic has provided the opportunity for sector representatives to meet frequently with Local Authority and CCG colleagues and includes three-times weekly specialist IPC advice sessions.

Work is underway across the county, led by a wide range of clinical, nursing, social care and commissioning and business support staff working together in local teams to support all sections of the care sector. Working around the geographies of South West Hampshire, North & Mid Hampshire and South East Hampshire and at scale across the whole of Hampshire, mechanisms are in place to provide a range of support to providers of all kinds in support of all social care service users. Key areas of activity are identified below in respect of the care home sector, whilst many of these apply regardless of setting.

Financial resilience of the care home sector

Hampshire County Council published inflationary increases in its standard fees in February 2020 (https://democracy.hants.gov.uk/documents/s43116/Decision_Report.pdf). These uplifts have been applied since April 2020. Additionally, HCC has moved quickly to increase temporary payments to care homes (and other providers) through bringing a 10% uplift in commissioned values to care homes and 5% to other care providers, in advance without further actions being required from providers. This temporary increase in payments will continue until July 2020, but will continue to be reviewed going forward. Furthermore, NHS commissioners have funded additional capacity in response to creating 'surge' capacity in acute hospitals and levels of funding and provision across the sector were extended – this has included several hundred additional beds across Hampshire, through the extension of care home 'winter' beds, as well as hotel provision designed to offer alternative Covid19 safe step-down capacity and additional support has been continued in response to the experienced demand pressures in order to support system capacity and resilience.

The recently announced national fund of £600m of support to the care home sector will see two tranches of £9.2m being available to the care home sector in Hampshire. This support is designed to provide two months' worth of support to the sector. It is subject to requirements set out in the grant conditions and will be subject to clawback if the funding is not used as prescribed. Payments to all providers are shown in Appendix 1.

Assurance will be necessary through reporting to Government on the application of the funding by late June and, in order to qualify for the funding support, all providers must regularly complete and update care tracker information. Hampshire County Council has moved very quickly to make the funding available to care home providers, 75% of which will be applied on a straight-line per capita basis to every registered care home provider in Hampshire for every registered care home bed. A further 15% will be applied to those providers, usually the smaller providers, at highest risk of financial challenge in responding to the Covid19 pandemic, with the remaining 10% used to support general emergency PPE supplies and other emergency support. This model of distribution was agreed by all stakeholders.

As of today's date, some £7,939,000 is in the process of being paid to some 489 care homes across the county of Hampshire. That process will be complete before this letter is received. £351,000 is currently being temporarily withheld while we resolve duplicate entries in the national care tracker return and £920,000 has been identified for emergency support, including the provision of emergency provision of PPE.

Hampshire County Council and NHS partners, working with Hampshire Care Association, will continue to support care providers with regular completion of essential data returns, both to give assurance as to sector's overall financial resilience and utilisation of the whole support offer, designed to keep residents and staff safe and living and working in stable environments.

Overview of specific work underway

Infection Prevention and Control

Pro-active engagement has been undertaken with the care home sector to offer a range of support measures. Amongst these are infection prevention and control training and on-line resources. Currently some 461 care homes across Hampshire have been contacted with 334 either undertaken or booked virtual or face-to-face training, with 127 declining the support offer.

Arrangements are in place to assess the efficacy of support being provided. Care settings experiencing continuing challenges and potentially requiring additional measures will be subject to ongoing monitoring by a group of senior managers, sector representatives and key stakeholders. A comprehensive set of data using PowerBi Dashboard for multi-agency use has been developed by Hampshire County Council, drawn from a variety of data sources to provide this sector oversight. Going forward through these data insights and through our regular contacts with providers we will ensure positive outcomes and support remain available.

We are keen that all providers understand and obtain the full benefits of the support available and will continue to regularly communicate and engage across the sector.

Testing

The most challenging element of the Covid19 pandemic has been with regard to testing for residents and staff. Progress to enable whole home testing for staff and residents continues to develop as part of a national approach. However, this has been and continues to be challenging on a local level for reasons outside of the control of local agencies (bearing in mind we work with a very effective and highly collaborative Local Resilience Forum). Staff across Hampshire County Council and the NHS continue to work with national partners to ensure access to and prioritisation for care settings most at risk. Through the Director for Public Health

mechanisms to enable better access to the national and regional testing regimes are ongoing and will continue to be subject to continuing scrutiny by all local parties.

Personal Protection Equipment

We have also seen challenges to PPE supply chains. Whilst these are, positively, beginning to improve, we are aware that access to PPE remains a challenge for some providers in some circumstances. Arrangements have been put in place through the Local Resilience Forum to enable access to emergency supplies of PPE for these providers.

From the week commencing 25th May a proportion of the recently announced national funding will be used to make access to a certain level of emergency supplies available free of charge. Arrangements relating to this will be communicated separately to providers.

Workforce support

We have seen incredible workforce resilience and dedication shown across the sector during the pandemic. Staff have shown themselves, en masse, to be heroes and quite rightly thanked each Thursday evening for their dedication and fortitude. Although we have established joint contingency arrangements to address any emergency workforce issues, these have only needed to be used once thus far. This is without doubt a huge credit to the resilience of the Hampshire care system. However, the availability of staffing support from HCC adult social care and NHS partners remains available should registered managers or providers require and request it. This support is available to be mobilised because HCC has retained a strong internal level of direct capacity for the provision of care.

Additionally, as identified earlier, the impacts and consequences of Covid19 will endure and it is vital that continuing support is available on an individual and sector basis. We will, through regular engagement with the sector, seek to ensure access to the emotional, psychological and counselling support that is inevitably going to be required. Much further work will be required to develop this at a size and scale necessary across the whole of the Hampshire social care workforce of some 37,000 staff. Support for people using services and their families will also be critical. With partners at HealthWatch Hampshire and our co-production and other networks we will ensure the voices of all service users, their families and our staff are heard and positively responded to. This commitment represents a significant potential strain on our resources and our people but is strongly supported by the strategic and political leadership of the local authority as the “right thing” to do at this exceptional time.

Clinical Support

Under the auspices of the Hampshire Clinical Commissioning Group Partnership and West Hampshire Clinical Commissioning Group every care home in Hampshire

now has a named clinical lead to act as a clinical advisor. Clinical leads have all been appointed and in the coming days relationships with care homes will be fully established. Additionally, named GP practices have been identified for every care home and, collectively, working with care homes, weekly virtual multi-disciplinary team meetings will be taking place to review patients identified as a clinical priority for assessment and care.

Processes are in place to ensure the development and delivery of personalised care and support plans for care home residents. In addition, medication and pharmacy support is being provided including the provision of structured medication reviews and support regarding medication queries.

These arrangements will require embedding in the coming days and weeks, but will be bolstered through quality arrangements across social care and health partners. This will further build on the work collectively being undertaken to support quality within the sector and for which providers themselves are playing a critical role.

Restoration and recovery

Finally, we recognise and acknowledge the need for all organisations to restore our services as required and move to a point whereby the sector can regain greater levels of stability and a return to “normality”, bearing in mind that some of the forces of the crisis have created benign reactions which we will wish to sustain in some shape or form – such as the newly formed relationships between individual care settings and local primary clinical care described above.

Within each local Integrated Care System, located around acute hospital footprints, arrangements are in place and will be carefully managed to enable the quarantining of people being discharged from hospital settings, subject to Covid19 testing and where appropriate admitted to care home settings.

These arrangements will be subject to oversight through normal mechanisms, including but not limited to the Health and Wellbeing Board, Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee, Hampshire Safeguarding Adults Board and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight STP Quality Surveillance Group. We will ensure that these mechanisms along with sector representation, sector regulators and the commissioning arrangements for social care and NHS partners, continues to work on these ongoing arrangements.

Also, these arrangements will be closely related to the rapidly evolving more generic “Test and Trace” arrangements and the introduction of the Outbreak Management Plan for Hampshire. The Hampshire County Council Director of Public Health is already leading the shadow board to oversee this plan and the Leader of the Council will personally chair the community facing political board. The relationship between this arrangement and the programme of support to care homes described in this letter, is already well described and established. As with these arrangements,

this plan will be closely related to the core governance arrangements of the County Council including the Gold Command and the sub-group for recovery.

We will continue to use the challenges of Covid19 within our opportunities for strengthened local arrangements and increased integration and collaboration across all partners in Hampshire.

In conclusion the measures outlined in this letter provide an overview of activity underway. Much detail lies behind this overview provided here. Regular updates will be provided in the coming weeks and shared with all partners and stakeholders.

At this point, on behalf of the leadership of Hampshire County Council, I am confident of the work underway, but recognise that much ongoing and continuing effort will be required. I do wish to pay tribute to the strategic leadership of these arrangements working to the DASS and the DPH for Hampshire.

I repeat that I am grateful for and humbled by the manner in which all social care service users, their families and care providers and their staff have supported our vulnerable residents. Thank you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Coughlan', written in a cursive style.

John Coughlan
Chief Executive