

11 September 2023**Agenda Item 4****REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND
PUBLIC HEALTH****SOCIAL CARE MARKET****Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide an update on the position of the social care market.

Information

2. There are considerable pressures within the social care market that impact on the Council's ability to meet its statutory duties to meet care and support needs and sustain the market, as well as provide people with choice and control over how best to meet their care needs. These primarily relate to the difficulties around recruitment and retention of staff and inflationary pressures affecting the financial sustainability of some services, which are compounding into market failure in terms of quality, sustainability or contractual compliance.
3. In March 2023, Cabinet approved £5.35 million to fund this year's uplifts. The money enabled the Council to maintain the increase in the fees for both home-based care and supported living contracted providers for 2023/24. This has had a positive impact on the social care market in Nottinghamshire, resulting in an increase in capacity, with the numbers of hours commissioned per week increasing by 13.5% to nearly 27,000 hours per week in July 2023 compared with December 2022. Since December 2022, there has been a month-by-month increase in the hours commissioned (3,200 hours difference). This increase in capacity has enabled more timely hospital discharges and reduced waiting times, with the Home First priority being met for those where this is the preferred outcome. The commissioning of interim care home beds is also reducing month-on-month.
4. Work continues with the Home First Response Service, which has achieved its contracted hours of delivery consistently. Joint working between the Transfer of Care Hubs, in-house Reablement Service and the Home First Response Service to ensure that those people who are medically fit for discharge are done so as soon as possible. This generally works well.
5. The care home bed capacity for people over the age of 65 remains more than sufficient to meet demand for residential care, though there is limited capacity for nursing beds in the Newark area. There are currently 14.9% of all care home beds available. In addition, where a placement is required for people over 65 who have a significant need in respect of their mental health, there has been some improvement in capacity where providers have responded to system demand.

6. The capacity for care home placements for those of working age is limited for those people with higher levels of complexity. In June 2023 there were only responses received (i.e., organisations interested in providing the care) for 60% of the specifications published on the dynamic purchasing system, which shows capacity is stretched. In addition, a recent care home closure has had an impact on capacity.
7. Since the Direct Payment Personal Assistant Commissioning team commenced in September 2022, the use of Personal Assistants has improved and continues to improve monthly. In September 2022, on average, 12 Personal Assistant packages were commissioned per month, but this has increased to an average of 23 packages per month in July 2023. Operational teams have provided positive feedback, reporting that they feel more confident in offering a Personal Assistant as a choice as the team are available to answer any challenging questions and provide support around the process.
8. Work continues with the whole of the social care market to inform the service needs and requirements of the people of Nottinghamshire, to support business development in a sustainable way.
9. The Market Shaping team are working with providers to develop innovative ways of working to deliver care and meet people's needs. An extensive Engagement Plan has been created and the team are working with providers and the Nottinghamshire Care Association to improve engagement with the wider market.
10. Regular 'innovation meetings' are held with providers to review and develop potential pilots and projects. Innovation pilots and projects recently undertaken include:
 - The Surge Service – This was a home-based care service that focused on delivering interim care that was reablement focused, whilst a longer-term solution was procured.
 - Provider-Led Reviews – The Council work in partnership with providers who undertake care package reviews on its behalf. This releases assessment resources within operational teams, reducing duplication, improves the experience of the person in receipt of the service and operates a strength-based approach.
 - Tech-Enabled Care – This pilot uses technology to support people to remain as independent as possible in the least invasive way. This has been particularly successful where people are reluctant to engage with care.
 - Digital Technology – Working in partnership with the system to increase the usage of technology within the market, including supporting providers to procure programs to upgrade the recording systems to digital and the use of acoustic monitoring systems to reduce the risk of falls.
 - Home-Based Care Pathway – A pilot to review the opportunities around a varied brokerage pathway for procuring contracted home-based care services.
 - Rural Brokerage Support – creating a network and reporting tool to support the brokerage of hard to serve packages.
11. Officers are working, through engagement events, with providers to understand some of the issues raised in the Annual Conversation:
 - a. Many people gave specific examples of services and individuals who support them well, including paid support staff and volunteers, Personal Assistants, Shared Lives carers and Relay UK.

- b. A number of people talked positively about workers that support them. Some people added comments about the pressures on paid care workers and how these impact on them and the care they received.
 - c. People shared positive experiences of using a Direct Payment. Some people added clarifying comments about the responsibility and paperwork that comes with this.
 - d. People shared examples of a lack of support at evenings and weekends. People talked about inflexible arrangements and being unable to get the right support at the right time, in ways that work for them.
 - e. Many people talked about the personal pressures of caring and the impact on their health and wellbeing. Many people shared the need for a break.
 - f. Some people's responses indicated they felt a sense of bewilderment, isolation and abandonment. People talked about the expectation that they step into the role – it is not always a choice.
12. To promote careers within the external social care market, two Social Care Careers events were trialled, one in Retford in September 2022 and one in Mansfield in October 2022.
- a. Nottinghamshire County Council funded the events, supported with promotional material (leaflets, posters, external banner), involved district councils, Councillors, local DWP office and social media activity.
 - b. The events were held in a "local community hub" and promoted by each venue to support the local market.
 - c. In Retford 17 providers supported the event / approx. 5 people attended the day & Mansfield 24 providers supported the event /approx. 25 people attended the day.
 - d. Events were a success from the view of provider engagement across all services and towards the common goal of promoting careers in care in our local communities.
 - e. Next step agreement is for social care providers to join up with planned recruitment fairs across the county. Link with Care4Notts and District Councils to ensure any offer is promoted to social care providers. Continue to support the inclusion of social care at school careers fairs.
13. To support the ongoing challenge of recruitment for our social care providers (9.5% vacancy rate) and in recognition of provider feedback around boosting the advertisement of their vacancies, a digital advertising agency has been funded to promote our Opportunities in Nottinghamshire (oppsinnotts) website, where our provider vacancies are hosted. As a result of the digital advertisement Opps in Notts has seen a significant increase in the amount of hits to the care job webpage.
14. Development of an External Social Care Strategy: Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottingham City and NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board are working with Skills for Care to improve the understanding of the local social care workforce within the independent and voluntary sectors. The project has been set up to provide deeper intelligence and insight into the sector workforce to:
- a. Help set priorities for the Integrated Care System's Integrated Care Workforce group.
 - b. Establish a basis for a long-term strategic planning, market shaping and commissioning for our adult social care workforce.
 - c. Aid development of a sustainable workforce: the right people with the right skills in the right place at the right time.

- d. Support the development of a strategic workforce strategy for the adult social care independent and voluntary sectors to meet the future needs of local people.
- e. Work from this project will be fed through the ICS Care Sector Workforce Steering Group, co-chaired by both local authorities.

15. Particular areas of focus for the directorate include:

- a. Support Nottinghamshire Care Association as it looks to support more sectors of the care market,
- b. Understand and review rurality-related care delivery.
- c. Partnership working with the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board and the City Council regarding working with the care market, particularly with regard to uplift consistency and development of more complex support.
- d. Technology-enabled care solutions, including the use of virtual visits and strengthening the use of technology within the departmental work.

Financial Implications

16. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) That Members consider whether there are any actions they require in relation to the update contained within the report.

Councillor Matt Barney

Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments (GMG 30/08/23)

- 17. These issues fall within the remit of the Adult Social Care and Public Health Select Committee for consideration (see Section 6, Part 1, paragraph 3(a) of the Council's Constitution on page 90).

Financial Comments (KRP 01/09/23)

- 18. As set out, this is an update report and there are no direct financial implications.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.