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NORTH WALES SOCIAL CARE AND WELL-BEING
SERVICES IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVE

Rapid Review of Care Homes

North Wales Care Home Action Plan

(September 2020- April 2021)

Introduction

Nursing and residential care homes provide care for the most frail and vulnerable in our communities, and during the COVID 19 pandemic they have faced extraordinary pressures and challenges keeping residents and staff safe. The care home sector in North Wales is diverse with 345 homes registered with Care inspectorate Wales including the independent / private sector, charitable/ not for profit, and local authorities. Together they provide 6,978 places (or beds) for residents, a bed base almost three times that of the hospitals within the region.

On the 1st July, the Deputy Director General, Albert Heaney, wrote to Health Boards and Local Authorities informing them of a nationally commissioned rapid review of care homes led by Professor John Bolton. Initial responses were prepared for Prof John Bolton/Welsh Government setting out the key interventions and actions undertaken by the Health Board and Local Authorities during the period. Senior officers have also participated in interviews and a regional workshop with Prof John Bolton.

This report sets out the Regional Care Home Action Plan for North Wales, which is required by Welsh Government. The Regional Partnership Board will consider the Action Plan for approval as soon as possible.

Overview

As strategic partners, the six Local Authorities and the Health Board are committed to ensuring the provision of a health and social care system that is fit for the population it serves. This includes the requirement to have care home provision that is able to provide good quality services during challenging times, such as that experienced during the spring of 2020.

To achieve these changes need to be made and new ways of working must be put in place. The last six months, dealing with the covid19 pandemic, has highlighted that although there is much to commend, there are things that need to be improved.

Some of the changes will be achievable in the short term, whilst others will take longer.

Context and key issues

Building productive partnerships

We are committed as a region to the ambition outlined in “A Healthier Wales”, having quality services local to our population wherever possible. The health and social care system should work in an integrated way with partners working collaboratively to co design and deliver services.

We acknowledge that there is more to do to build effective partnerships with the care home sector. In previous regional reviews (e.g. 5days in a room), we identified this as an issue and despite a range of changes being made, the covid19 pandemic has highlighted that there remains work to be done to improve the nature and maturity of relationships with care home providers in North Wales.

Early feedback from the Care home rapid review by Prof John Bolton has highlighted that statutory bodies are not effectively commissioning care homes, rather they are purchasing and contracting care from an existing market.

Building on the good work progressed with care homes during the pandemic, we need to ensure future work is carried out in partnership with the sector who are knowledgeable and experienced in providing care to some of the most vulnerable older people in our communities.

By doing this, we will establish a different relationship with the providers – moving away from a relationship driven by monitoring and checking, into one where we co design and develop services. This will need to be managed sensitively and professionally alongside the complimentary roles, which must continue with to drive the quality of care and take appropriate, proportionate action when there are shortcomings.

We have regional governance arrangements in place, with some groups and committees having been in place for a number of years. Although we have been successful in moving forward many key pieces of work, we believe it is timely to review and refresh these arrangements

Regional approach

From the outset of the pandemic a range of multiagency planning and reporting arrangements were put in place as part of the overall emergency response. These have been effective in providing high level tactical coordination and operational responses. A health and social care emergency planning group was established as part of the regional command structure alongside a Care Home Cell led by the Health Board with input from Public Health Wales, the Regional Partnership Board, Care Forum Wales and Care Inspectorate Wales. Operational delivery and response arrangements were also put in place at a local authority and area team level to support the sector.

During the pandemic, we worked with partners to change the culture and reduce the burden placed on care homes from multiple contacts. This has developed into a new data collection and early warning system making “one contact a day” calls to care

homes. This ensures a minimum data set is collected and shared between statutory partners so that appropriate support is offered in a timely way. This system is still in place although is now happening twice a week. This information informs the North Wales care home escalation and support tool. This dynamic reporting provides early indicators of pressures and issues and allows early intervention and support.

During the pandemic three multiagency Home First Bureau were established to support the timely and appropriate transfer of patients from acute and community hospitals back to their own homes, existing care home or new placement. They are an integral part of the COVID-19 Hospital discharge Service requirements (Wales) and have been essential to the safe implementation of the revised step up and step down care ensuring that negative test results are available for patients before they are discharged from hospital back to their care settings, or moving between care homes. We are committed to embedding these arrangements within the health and social care system to ensure the safe transfer and discharge of patients.

Social care needs assessments and NHS CHC eligibility assessments will be undertaken in a community setting and not in an acute hospital. Welsh Government have confirmed that this is their expectation and the NHS should continue to use the discharge to recover and assess pathway working closely with adult social care, the wider care sector and voluntary sector. Whilst most people will be discharged to their own home, a small proportion will need and benefit from short or long term residential or nursing home care. The financial support and funding flows have been changed during the pandemic and the provisions made are subject to ongoing review by Welsh government.

Our new ways of working and our governance structure need to reflect better our ambition to ensure that future work is carried out in the true spirit of partnership with those providing care. The scope, purpose and membership of the regional commissioning board will be reviewed and refreshed to provide the strategic oversight and leadership required.

Sustainability: Workforce and Finance

One of the truly inspiring images we have of the pandemic is the heroic work of care staff, which was not necessarily recognised by the media or population at large at the outset of the pandemic. Their personal contribution and impact soon became evident. As a region, we are committed to ensuring that this change of profile is not lost and that we ensure that the needs of individual staff are identified and supported.

Some of the work we plan to undertake here relates to ensuring the right level of support is provided to care homes, whether that is access to primary care clinical staff, environmental health officers or experts in public health and infection prevention and control.

We will build on the work progressed during the pandemic to ensure that when the need arises staff are available to care homes from a regional pool. We want to ensure that providers feel supported when significant challenges arise, and that they know we will all work together to support each other.

A key aspect of any system is that of ensuring that staff possess the right skills in order to be able to perform their work effectively. Without the challenges of the recent pandemic, most care homes are able to deliver good quality services. What has become evident is that with a small amount of additional training individual care home are better placed to cope with the very specific and unique challenges faced. In particular, this relates to matters such as infection prevention and control and basic clinical monitoring.

A key factor to focus on if we are to achieve a sustainable and resilient care sector going forward is financial viability. We will ensure that any short term funding from the WG hardship fund is managed effectively, and for the longer-term sustainability and resilience of the sector, we will need to consider how we can move to align our fees methodology in line with the principles described in “Let’s Agree to Agree”2018.

This action plan tracks the key recommendations identified in Prof John Bolton’s early findings which he shared with the region and provides a local response t to the issues raised This plan covers the period Sept 2020 to April 2021 and will be reviewed no later than March 2021.

North Wales Care Homes Action Plan – September 2020

Theme: strategic arrangements within the North Wales region

Actions	Outputs	Lead	Timeframe	Performance Measure
Review the nature of our relationship with our Care Home providers, ensure that future work is carried out in a spirit of true partnership with those providing care to some of the most vulnerable adults in the health, and care system.	Reviewed and refreshed Group/Boards (e.g. Commissioning Board)	RCB	Medium	Feedback from care home providers Feedback from LA commissioners Feedback from BCU Area Teams Feedback from provider forums
At a local level there needs to be an operational group that is clear on their roles and responsibilities that can coordinate the support that is needed by different care homes.	Map local partnership working arrangements in each LA /Area Team and share best practice. Review and refresh the groups reporting to the Regional Commissioning Board	AISB	Short	Approval of the revised governance by the NWRPB.

Theme: operational support for care homes within the region

Actions	Output/Outcome	Lead	Time-frame	Performance Measure
We will support each Care Home to have a business continuity plan.	Share best practice and provide access to expert advice via NW Emergency Planning Service, CIW and the like.	NWREPS & CFW	Short - Medium	Each care home within the region will have reviewed their business continuity plan and managers of each home will be confident of actions that need to be taken when necessary
We will assist Care Homes within the Region in ensuring that there is an “infection control” action plan in place.	Better understanding of access to infection control advice available via the statutory bodies.	RCB & Public Health Wales	Medium	Each home will have the skills necessary to be able to implement an infection control plan when necessary and will have the

Actions	Output/Outcome	Lead	Time-frame	Performance Measure
	<p>Map the support and training available for care homes on infection control.</p> <p>Consider providing training in line with best practice.</p>			<p>training appropriate to their setting and level of risk.</p>
<p>We will ensure there is a staffing contingency plan in place for the region.</p>	<p>Staffing contingency plan is in place regionally.</p> <p>Completion of the arrangements for access to BCUHB HCA bank staff if this remains appropriate in light of recent WG letter.</p>	<p>NW Regional Workforce Board</p>	<p>Short</p>	<p>All care homes will be clear on how they can access staff in an emergency</p>
<p>We will consider how we advise Care Homes on the best way to deploy staff during an outbreak eliminating those staff who work in more than one setting and ensure that the BAME Risk Assessment tool is known to care homes and used appropriately.</p>	<p>Reinforce national advice on reducing or eliminating staff working in multiple settings.</p> <p>Take appropriate action if there is non-compliance.</p>	<p>NW Regional Workforce Board</p>	<p>Short</p>	<p>All care homes will be clear and be supported on the safe use of emergency staff – both internal / external and agency staff</p>
<p>We will review and consider how we continue to support the well-being of all staff who have worked through the pandemic.</p>	<p>We will have a plan that reflects the current national, regional and local arrangements in place.</p> <p>Reflect with Providers on the effectiveness of current arrangements and consider additional support as appropriate.</p>	<p>NW Regional Workforce Board</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Wellbeing plan is in place regionally for care staff with key interventions in place to support staff within care homes</p>

Actions	Output/Outcome	Lead	Time-frame	Performance Measure
<p>We will consider how to assist all care homes in having meaningful activities in place for residents during any pandemic, with a focus on activities that are appropriate for those who are socially isolating and for those with dementia including taking account of emotional well-being.</p>	<p>Work in partnership to ensure Care Homes have access to ideas and resources to support residents during further outbreaks.</p> <p>Learn and build on Dementia Box project in Wrexham and ICF funded supply of iPads for communication with relatives and entertainment e.g. streaming Katherine Jenkins concerts.</p>	<p>Care Forum Wales / Alzheimer Society / Age Cymru</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Feedback from care homes and residents</p>
<p>We will consider how we will assist local GPs in establishing clear enhanced arrangements for every Care Home in their area. Where this is not possible, the practitioners who have patients in particular Care Homes need to be clear on how residents will be supported.</p>	<p>Monitor the implementation and impact of the National Direct Enhanced Service for care homes and provide feedback on its effectiveness.</p> <p>Build on work undertaken in using digital technology for delivery of care and support e.g. Remote Consultations, Advice and Reviews.</p>	<p>BCUHB Assistant Director of Community and Primary Services</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Compliance with the DES with assurance reporting as required to the RCB.</p>
<p>We will review and consider how we can assist care homes in ensuring they have equal priority for the available supply of PPE if there was a further pandemic.</p>	<p>Maintain current supply and distribution systems to respond to further outbreaks.</p>	<p>Procurement leads of each LA/HB and WG/NWRE PS</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Review / audit of situation in 6/12 months</p>

Actions	Output/Outcome	Lead	Time-frame	Performance Measure
We will consider how we can ensure that the processes are in place to back up the test and trace arrangements for care homes.	Continue to monitor the effectiveness of the daily MDT calls between Care Homes Hub and TTP team.	Exec Lead BCUHB / TTP leads in LAs / PHW	Medium	Review and feedback from care home managers and LA testing leads
We will consider how our local risk assessments are undertaken and how these will be shared with care homes, thus enabling them to take action to reduce their risks.	Share the escalation and support framework for care homes and seek feedback from the sector on its effectiveness.	Commissioning leads within LA's and BCUHB / Operational groups/AISBs	Short	Feedback from care home managers that they understand and are able to learn from the risk assessment undertaken on their home
We will consider how we arrange for short-term beds (intermediate care) to be available to help the recovery of patients who have been in hospital and are required to isolate to ensure they are not spreading the virus within the community/care homes.	<p>Maintain ongoing discussions and planning at an AISB level of the number of intermediate care beds and surge capacity available across region and develop protocols for their use (if not already in place). This will be shared with relevant professionals to ensure they are used effectively.</p> <p>Updating plans in line with learning from National Intermediate Care Project Group.</p>	AISBs	Short	Appropriate bed capacity available. DToC figures
We will work to ensure that all relevant staff within acute hospitals understand and are able to use the local arrangements that are in place to support the safe discharge of patients to care homes.	<p>Maintain regular communication and briefings across all 3 acute sites with changes in national guidance.</p> <p>Early identification of problems and effective resolution.</p>	AISB and Acute Site Managers	Short	<p>Feedback from Care Home Staff and NWASH</p> <p>Datix reporting of inappropriate discharges.</p>

Actions	Output/Outcome	Lead	Time-frame	Performance Measure
We will consider how we ensure that communication with care homes is managed and operates effectively (sharing information to ensure that homes get the best possible support whilst limiting the burden on the care homes).	Consolidate the arrangements for ongoing engagement with care homes.	AISBs / Commissioning leads of LAs / Care Forum Wales R,I & I manager	Short	Feedback from care home managers and commissioning managers
We will consider how we can determine the best way to simplify and coordinate the dissemination of national and local guidance in order to share it with our care home providers in a timely and effective way.	Maintain the agreed information sharing arrangements now in place between LAs and NHS. Review of what worked well and what could be better.			
We will review and consider how we will continue to support our care sector financially now and in the future.	<p>Undertake a review of how the WG hardship fund worked.</p> <p>Undertake a review of the core fund for CHC placements.</p> <p>Consider the principles of “let’s agree to agree” and ensure / re-establish sustainable fees going forward with the support of WG.</p>	Regional Commissioning Board / National Commissioning Board/ WG / Finance Teams	Short - Medium	Financial audit / WAO view / Care Forum Wales / Providers
We will consider how we capture the lessons learned from actions taken during the current pandemic, especially where they have had to take emergency action.	Have clarity as a region of what were the lessons resulting from actions taken. This could be achieved with the help of the Research, Innovation and Improvement Team	R, I & I Manager BCUHB lead	Medium	

Actions	Output/Outcome	Lead	Time-frame	Performance Measure
	Share the learning from the Actions of the Care Homes cell during the current pandemic.			
Work with care homes to develop and oversee the delivery of a programme of flu vaccination for residents and staff as well as a plan for delivery of covid vaccine when available	All care homes will be clear of how and when they will receive flu vaccine and also when available to covid vaccine	Flu lead BCUHB / Covid Vaccine Lead (Ffion)	Short	All care home residents and staff are given vaccine in a timely and effective way

Time scale for implementation

Short – Sept 2020-Jan 2021

Medium – Feb – Aug 2012