

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Covid 19 Pandemic - Council's response - Care Homes</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Monday, 13 July 2020
<b>WARD</b>	None Specific;
<b>KEY OFFICER</b>	Matt Pope, Director Adult Services

## **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

To provide Members with an overview of the Council's response to the Covid 19 pandemic with regards to care homes within Wokingham Borough.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider the presentation on the Council's response to Covid 19 with regards to the care homes within the Borough.

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

At its meeting on 24 June 2020, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee considered a report on the Council's response to the Covid 19 pandemic. The Committee considered the process and timeline for carrying out further detailed Scrutiny of specific issues set out in the report. The Committee also agreed which issues should be scrutinised by the Management Committee and which should be addressed by the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

It was agreed that the Council's response relating to care homes would be scrutinised by the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The extract relating to care homes from the report to the Management Committee is set out below for information. Please note that some of this information may now be out of date.

### **SECTION 2 – SPECIFIC UPDATES BY THEME/SERVICE**

#### **2.1 Care Homes**

*The Borough's care homes have worked tirelessly through this extremely difficult period to protect and support their residents. Local care homes are usually run by private or voluntary sector service providers. Private care homes are run for profit by private organisations and individual proprietors. Voluntary sector homes are not-for-profit and are run by registered charities, religious organisations and housing associations, sometimes for specific groups of people.*

*There are 53 Care Quality Commission (CQC) registered care home settings within Wokingham Borough. This is a broad definition and includes both older people care homes (residential and nursing) and learning disability care homes.*

*95% of the care homes in the Borough, inspected by the CQC, were rated as 'good' or 'outstanding' prior to the outbreak of the virus (February 2020).*

*As Councillors and Council Officers became increasingly concerned about the situation in care homes locally, we lobbied our MPs, the Local Resilience Forum, Public Health England and the NHS for testing of those being discharged to our care homes. We also lobbied for improved supplies of PPE, more testing in care homes and more infection control nursing support. We increased our support to local care homes, including providing emergency supplies of PPE and sending staff teams into homes to support with specific issues.*

*Despite this lobbying and support, Government guidelines continued to allow the potential discharge of patients with coronavirus into our care homes, so we took the decision on 21st April to suspend hospital discharge into our care homes. Discharges could only occur if the patient had been tested or the care home had the correct infection control procedures in place and could confidently isolate the resident if needed.*

*Locally, we established a protocol and task force with health and social care colleagues. This process works proactively with our care homes to prevent the spread of COVID-19, assess and support their readiness to take and manage positive cases and ensure they receive all the support they need. It also supports the Councils safeguarding function.*

*The task force is just one way the Borough Council has supported care homes during the pandemic crisis. Other initiatives include:*

- An improved funding deal for care homes we contract with, prepayments to support with cash flow plus ability to apply for additional temporary funding;*
- Help with supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – over 386,000 pieces of PPE have been supplied to our care homes;*
- Regular advice and guidance including financial sustainability and infection control- over 400 calls to registered care homes;*
- Testing for staff with symptoms – more than 250 staff tested, plus others who have self-referred for testing via the government website (we are unable to quantify how many have self-referred, as we do not receive this data);*
- Offer of access to staff in an emergency Infection control hotline established.*

*Adult Social Care has been working with our local providers to facilitate mutual aid across the sector. This has included:*

- Wokingham Provider Portal; online access to relevant guidance and supporting information;*
- Establishing the Care Workers Support Team; pool of care worker staff and facilitated central recruitment programme;*
- 7 day working across social care and commissioning to facilitate hospital discharge and support providers;*
- Spiritual and emotional support is available through the Community Hub.*

### **Comparative Number of Deaths in Care Homes**

*Any local death is an extremely important issue for Wokingham Borough Council. Officers have been working hard to support local care homes during the pandemic since March, as evidenced above.*

*The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes data on COVID19-related deaths within all care homes across the country. This ONS data shows the following:*

- Between the 1st January and 29<sup>th</sup> May 2020, 73 (Covid19 related) deaths occurred within Wokingham Borough care homes – this equates to a rate of 54 Covid-19 deaths per 1,000 care home beds in Wokingham;*
- Despite having the second highest number of care home beds in Berkshire, the COVID19 death rate in Wokingham is not the worst death rate in comparison to neighbouring boroughs.*

*However, the public are advised to take extra caution when comparing Covid-19 deaths between neighbouring authorities. This is because different boroughs have different population sizes, with different age structures – some with more elderly residents than others. Therefore, in order to make fairer comparisons, it is crucial that we standardise the ONS data to take account of the number of residents, their ages, their vulnerabilities, and the number of care homes across each borough. We are publishing this data on our website...*

A presentation on the Council's response to Covid 19 with regards to care homes, will follow.

<b>Partner Implications</b>
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N/A
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<b>Public Sector Equality Duty</b>
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Scrutiny of any aspects of the response should consider the way the Council discharged its equality duties.
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<b>Reasons for considering the report in Part 2</b>
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None
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<b>List of Background Papers</b>
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None
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