

West Lothian Integration Joint Board

Date: 30 June 2020

Agenda Item: 13

COVID-19 RESPONSE

REPORT BY CHIEF OFFICER

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

- A1** The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the West Lothian IJB on how services within the West Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic.

B RECOMMENDATION

- B1** To note the partnership response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the work to be undertaken to remobilise services as the pandemic eases

C SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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| C1 | Directions to NHS Lothian and/or West Lothian Council | A direction(s) is not required. |
| C2 | Resource/ Finance | Mobilisation plan has been developed in response to the pandemic with funding sought from the Scottish Government to support of circa £6.67m |
| C3 | Policy/Legal | Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation |
| C4 | Risk | The risk is captured within the existing risks on the risk register and will be monitored. |
| C5 | Equality/Health | The report has been assessed as having little or no relevance with regard to equality or the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a result, an equality impact assessment has not been conducted. The relevance assessment can be viewed via the background references to this report. |

C6	Environment and Sustainability	None
C7	National Health and Wellbeing Outcomes	All are relevant
C8	Strategic Plan Outcomes	All are relevant
C9	Local Outcomes Improvement Plan	All are relevant
C10	Impact on other Lothian IJBs	Some dependencies for mutual aid and joint working

D TERMS OF REPORT

D1 Background

COVID-19 is a new strain of Coronavirus which was first identified in Wuhan, China. Clinical presentation may range from mild to moderate illness to pneumonia or severe acute respiratory infection. COVID-19 was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organisation on 12 March 2020. Communities across the United Kingdom have experienced spread of COVID-19 and extensive measures were implemented to slow the transmission. In Scotland the recommendations for everyone to stay at home as much as possible and severely restrict their interactions with others outside the household have helped to reduce the spread of the virus.

D2 Throughout the pandemic the partnership has responded to the guidance issued by Health Protection Scotland and the Scottish Government to develop services and respond appropriately to this rapidly evolving situation. This report provides a summary of the key actions undertaken across the partnership in response.

D3 Personal Protective Equipment

Infection prevention and control measures and provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) are essential to protect staff and patients and limit the spread of infection. To coordinate supply, a PPE Hub was set up in Livingston which offered an effective model for the distribution of PPE across health and social care services 5 days a week.

D4 In addition to supporting services, the Hub is working closely with Carers of West Lothian to ensure that unpaid carers and Personal Assistants are able to access appropriate PPE. Work continues with NHS Lothian's procurement service and National Services Scotland to determine the most effective supply routes and the outcomes of this will inform the operational requirement for the hub going forward.

D5 Community COVID-19 Pathway

The Community Covid-19 Pathway is a national pathway which has been introduced to manage Covid-19 demand in a separate stream from other conditions requiring clinical assessment to maximise the number of symptomatic people who can be cared for in the community, thereby reducing demand on primary and secondary care and minimising transmission of Covid-19 infections via healthcare settings.

D6 The model for the Covid-19 Community Pathway includes:

- 111 as a single point of entry for people concerned about Covid-19 symptoms. NHS24 have three dispositions; self-care advice, 1 hour call-back and 4 hour call-back.
- A local telephone triage hub, providing clinical assessment of people referred by NHS24. This is located within the Flow Centre and Out of Hours Hub at Astley Ainslie Hospital
- If clinically indicated, access to face to face assessment within dedicated community assessment centres

A number of Community Assessment Centres were opened across Lothian to provide advice, triage and treatment for people with Covid-19 symptoms. A West Lothian centre was opened on 8 April in Outpatient Department 1 at St John's Hospital. As the levels of infections have reduced over time, the number of people attending the centre had reduced to around 10 per week. In response to the reducing demand, NHS Lothian agreed to centralise provision to one site in Lothian at the Western General Hospital from the 20th June 2020 with taxi service available for people who require transport to and from the centre. This will allow the outpatient services which had been discontinued to start up again, in particular Diabetes and Ophthalmology.

D7 Hospital Capacity

Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic created conditions for the whole system to come together in 'common purpose' to create more hospital bed capacity through the immediate reduction of delayed discharges. As a priority, the partnership created a new senior leadership role based in St John's Hospital with a mandate to address process issues which contributed to delayed discharge and to test new ways of working and decision-making which supports timely patient movement from hospital.

D8 Key successes have been the establishment of the 'Integrated Discharge Hub' as a proactive flow centre where key hub roles and accountabilities have been reviewed and where patient data tracking is more proficient and in real time. For example, the realignment of hospital social workers and REACH nursing (Frailty Assessment) teams to dedicated wards has allowed the tracking of cases on an individual level, enabled more effective decisions at the hub daily multidisciplinary team meetings and created a more streamlined process for the community 'discharge to assess' teams

D9 Discharge to Assess

The development of a permanent Discharge to Assess (D2A) team has established new ways of working focused on admission avoidance from the emergency department and the medical assessment unit. Focussed work by the team has reduced patients' length of stay in hospital and allowed patients' needs to be assessed in their own home. Key professionals including community therapists are being utilised in a more effective way for example the Care Home Health Team have developed an assessment tool which supports safer transfer from hospital to care home, which has been very successful. Going forward, the focus is on developing pathways for those patients moving from acute hospital to community hospitals.

D10 The new ways of working has had a positive impact for patients and staff as well as a significant improvement in performance which has seen a reduction from 71 delays in mid March to 6 health and social care delays at time of report. Going forward the focus will be on embedding new ways of working and sustain improvement in preparation for winter 2020-2021.

D11 Near Me – GP Video Conferencing

Two sets of video conferencing facilities, Near Me, have been installed in all GP practices across West Lothian and are being used by GPs to work with patients via video link. Feedback has been very positive from GPs and will form part of the primary care remobilisation plan. Wider roll out of Near Me is being progressed across other services such as mental health and will form an important part of future service provision

D12 Day Services

West Lothian's adult and older people's day services were closed at the outset of the pandemic to limit the spread of infection. Staff teams were re-directed to offer outreach care and meals at home where appropriate.

Care at Home

D13 Capacity within the Care at Home sector is dependent on a range of factors, most notably on the recruitment and retention of staff. As reported to the Integration Joint Board on 10th March 2020 providers had experienced significant issues in recruiting care staff in West Lothian.

D14 Whilst it is recognised that recruitment challenges for social care services are a national issue, there were particular local challenges for providers insofar as West Lothian has a relatively robust economy and recruitment in the care sector competes with strong performance in the retail and distribution markets.

D15 Providers are now reporting a significant improvement in their ability to recruit staff in sufficient numbers. While providers have reported that they have had staff self-isolating or shielding, they have still been able to manage their staffing effectively to continue to support their clients.

D16 Care Homes

Considerable focus has been placed on the care home sector where the consequences of the infection for this vulnerable population are significant. West Lothian has 16 Care Homes providing care and support for older people, who often have high levels of physical dependence and dementia, many of whom are in the last years or months of life. Outbreaks are difficult to prevent in this setting for several reasons:

- The care required to support personal activities of daily living such as dressing, washing and toileting, cannot be provided without close , frequent and often prolonged personal contact with caregivers;
- Atypical presentations of this infection are common which makes it much harder to recognise the infection in some residents;
- Many residents are physically frail, with multiple co-morbidities, which in themselves increase susceptibility;
- The high infectivity of the virus means it spreads faster than many other infections.

As has been widely reported, Covid-19 is having a significant impact on older people and sadly there have been a number of deaths in care home settings across Scotland. The most recent update from the National Records of Scotland shows that 90 people in West Lothian have sadly died where COVID-19 was mentioned on the death certificate, of which 38 were in Care Homes.

D17 Care Home Support and Oversight

Supporting care homes is a core component of health and social care integration and we have well established relationships with all our providers across West Lothian. Our provision of support to Care Homes has focussed on supporting care homes to implement all aspects of the National Clinical and Practice Guidance for Adult Care Homes in Scotland during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

- D18** The guidance was updated on the 15th May 2020 with more detail on the practical steps required to support good infection control within care homes and to ensure the provision of safe and effective person centred care. The capacity of our Care Home Team has been enhanced to enable provision of more clinical support to manage residents' needs and to link to other specialist teams such as REACT (Hospital at Home) where required.
- D19** On the 17th May 2020 the Scottish Government issued further guidance to NHS Board Chief Executives, Directors of Public Health, Medical Directors, Nurse Directors, Local Authority Chief Executives, Chief Social Work Officers and IJB Chief Officers. This guidance sets out new and additional responsibilities for clinical and professional leads in every local authority and health board that will provide daily support and oversight of the care provided in care homes in their area including arrangements for testing, infection prevention and control.
- D20** In responding to this guidance we have established processes to gather daily information from care homes to summarise COVID-19 related activity including availability of PPE and compliance with infection prevention and control measures, workforce issues and any testing undertaken. A daily meeting with the Chief Nurse, the Chief Social Work Officer, Chief Officer, Senior Managers and Public Health representatives takes place to undertake a rapid rundown of all West Lothian care homes to identify emerging issues and determine the appropriate response. Testing of residents and staff is being undertaken in accordance with Public Health and Government guidance to reduce risk of transmission of infection and optimise outcomes.
- D21 Communication and Sustainability of Commissioned Services**
The partnership has effective communication in place with all commissioned services in West Lothian, including a dedicated mailbox for any COVID-19 related enquires. This mailbox is staffed 7 days a week which also ensures that providers can submit requests for staff testing (symptomatic) without delay over the weekend.
- D22** The National principles of sustainability payments to social care providers during COVID-19 place responsibilities on commissioners to ensure that the social care sector remains sustainable during the emergency response, and arrangements have been notified to all providers. These arrangements include claim forms for additional COVID-19 related expenditure (e.g. PPE, maintaining staff salaries during any period of COVID-19 related absence) as well as occupancy payments for care homes. The process has been designed to be as straightforward as possible, to reduce the burden on providers whilst ensuring that sufficient information is provided to validate any claim. Providers have a responsibility to ensure that they can evidence their claim and also that there is no duplication of claims, for example that they are not claiming from a Government scheme as well as through the local partnership.

D23 Mental Health

Mental Health services have seen a steady increase in activity in recent weeks. In Adult Mental Health, the Community Mental Health Team has operated a Red/Amber/Green system to see patients and it is noted that patients with Personality Disorders appear to have been particularly affected by the effects of the pandemic. The service is developing a new pathway specifically for people with Personality Disorders and will use the experiences during the pandemic to inform that work.

D24 Work has begun across the service on the “new normal” and how the service can adapt to the expected new rules around social distancing, face-to-face contacts etc. It is acknowledged that the pressure on Mental Health and Addictions Services are likely to increase in the coming weeks.

D25 To support capacity within the Emergency Department at St John’s Hospital the Acute Care and Support Team have moved out to OPD5 temporarily. This has resulted in the service employing additional security to ensure the safety of staff and patients. Discussions are underway with the site management team to agree the future arrangements for the service and its return to the Emergency Department.

D26 Staff Well Being

COVID-19 has changed our lives and placed exceptional demands on people working in health and social care. Across the HSCP there has been a variety of responses to support staff Health & Wellbeing with both West Lothian Council and NHS Lothian enhancing their normal support systems with a particular focus on psychological support and provision of staff listening and counselling services.

D27 A National Wellbeing Hub for the health and social care workforce has been set up and can be accessed at <http://www.promis.scot/>. This Hub contains resources for individual employees and for managers to assist them in supporting their staff.

D28 Staff Testing Site – West Lothian

Whilst out with the responsibilities of the IJB, the opening of a staff testing site on the grounds of West Lothian College will provide improved access to staff testing and this includes staff across health and social care, including those from independent care providers. The centre, operated by NHS Lothian, is open Monday to Saturday from 9am to 6pm and means that if staff have symptoms, they can be tested within the first 72 hours, and if negative, and appropriate, can return to work. This is a welcome expansion to the testing of staff and household members.

D29 Voluntary Sector Response

The Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian (VSGWL) is leading the Third Sector response to the pandemic and is coordinating formal volunteering activities with West Lothian Council and Third Sector partners across the region to make sure help is directed to those in most need. A Directory of Services has been published on their website together with a Covid-19 Resource information hub with links to key agencies, volunteering, health and well-being resource and funding opportunities.

D30 A range of formal and informal groups have emerged providing essential support and services to vulnerable individuals and hard hit communities across West Lothian. Food poverty partners have formed consortia to ensure food is provided to children and families. Services are helping to improve physical and mental health and reduce feelings of isolation for vulnerable individuals within communities. Voluntary organisations have adapted quickly and many are providing essential help and support through online means as far as possible.

D31 Around 1200 people have signed up to be volunteers during the crisis and are providing a wide range of supports such as delivering food parcels, PPE supplies to carers, medicine pick-ups and support as ward helpers in St John's. It is hoped that individuals will be able to secure long term volunteering opportunities post Covid-19.

D32 The sector has been able to access much needed financial support through a number of Scottish Government funding grants, including Wellbeing Fund, Third Sector Resilience Fund, Food Fund and Supporting Communities Fund. Around £850K of funding has been provided to help organisations to deliver services, West Lothian Council established a £327k Hardship Fund to support the sector and VSGWL has provided a £52K emergency fund in partnership with National Lottery to support local, grass roots organisations and groups that are responding to the Covid-19 pandemic

D33 Carers of West Lothian

Since March 2020 staff at Carers of West Lothian have been working from home and have adapted the delivery model to continue to support unpaid carers and disabled adults through embracing digital technology. In the period to the end of May, 345 unpaid carers were supported and 95 new carers have referred themselves in the same period. Service users have been supported through telephone calls, with weekly check-ins provided to more vulnerable people.

D34 A COVID19 information page has been included on the website to help people with practical support such as food parcels and medication deliveries and signposting to services as required. Peer support groups have moved online using Zoom to connect people to volunteers with staff facilitating groups. New activities have been introduced including Tai Chi, quizzes, family disco nights and a Fitness Bootcamp which have proven popular.

- D35** 78 carers have been provided with Time to Live funding through the Short Breaks Fund. Instead of providing respite for weekends away, carers have used this to purchase tablets and garden furniture to allow them to have time out and to connect with family and friends and group activities. Engaging via Zoom has enabled many people to join groups they would never have been able to before and COWL will seek to retain virtual connections alongside face to face groups to offer a “hybrid” of the two to reach out to more carers in the future
- D36** Funding from Scottish Government Carers Centre Remote Working Fund, Foundation Scotland’s Response Recovery and Resilience Fund, SP Energy, West Lothian Council’s Hardship Fund, STV Children’s Appeal has supported new ways of working.
- D37** Two surveys and focus groups have been conducted which will inform the strategy over the next 9 months as we ease out of lockdown and focus support in the areas where we know there is most need: information and advice, emotional support, and peer support. It is estimated that 392,000 additional people in Scotland have emerged as carers during COVID19 and consideration is to be given to how support can be given to new carers in West Lothian
- D38 Governance**
It was not considered necessary to put in place *ad hoc* governance arrangements during the pandemic due to the provisions already written into Standing Orders, which were reviewed and revised in September 2019, to deal with emergencies and urgent business. It was considered that these provisions would allow a speedy and effective response in both operational and governance terms. The provisions relied on are: -
- Standing Order 16 says that the Chief Officer may take any necessary action where a matter arises of such urgency that it cannot await a decision of the Board. The Chief Officer cannot act before consulting the Chair and Vice-Chair about the merits of the planned actions and must consult the Standards Officer about the procedures. Everything done in reliance on this provision must be reported the next meeting of the Board
 - The Scheme of Delegations says the Chief Officer, in consultation with the IJB Chair, Vice-Chair and Standards Officer, is authorised to take urgent action on behalf of the IJB under Standing Order 16
 - Those emergency provisions are over and above the more normal terms of the Scheme of Delegation which delegate the day to day operations of the Board to its senior officers
- D39** All of those powers, emergency and otherwise, must be used in accordance with the law, statutory guidance, the Integration Scheme, the Strategic Plan, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Board policies, procedures and instructions.

D40 Almost all of the actions taken concerned operational matters which would normally be dealt with by officers under the general terms of the Scheme of Delegation.

D41 The emergency powers were used in relation to upcoming scheduled meetings, principally the Board meeting on 21 April. Lockdown measures were announced north and south of the border on 23 March. Statutory rules quickly followed, effective on 25 March. They restricted movement from home, gatherings in public places and the operation of businesses and other designated premises. After informal discussions officers consulted the Chair and Vice-Chair, through the Standards Officer, by email on 26 March.

- The main recommendation was that the Board meeting scheduled for 21 April was cancelled due to travel restrictions and the risk of transmission and contagion. There was no scheduled business that could not be deferred and most of the significant Board business around the end of one reporting year and the start of the next had been disposed of at the previous meeting
- It was recommended that the Board meeting scheduled for 30 June was retained for a future decision and
- The Audit Risk & Governance Committee meeting scheduled for 27 May was retained since it had statutory business to do.

D42 Officers undertook to look at how meetings could be held by remote participation as is allowed under law and Standing Orders. After consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair a formal report was prepared as if the Board were being asked to take the decision. The Chief Officer approved its recommendations on 31 March. That report is with the agenda for today's meeting for information so that Board members and the public can see the emergency action that was taken.

The decision was communicated to Board members by the Clerk by email on 31 March. The Clerk also sent reports by the Chief Officer to Board members on 14 April and 26 May, to keep Board members informed of some of the actions being taken at an operational level

D43 The Audit Risk & Governance Committee meeting was successfully conducted by remote access using WebEx on 27 May ensuring that it carried out its role in the statutory process for the Board's annual accounts. It is intended to carry on using remote access for meetings in the short term but that will be kept under review in light of developing circumstances.

D44 Mobilisation Plan

The partnership was requested to submit a mobilisation plan at the start of the pandemic to the Scottish Government and progress against anticipated expenditure has been monitored on a regular basis in accordance with the Scottish Government's schedule. The full year cost of mobilisation is estimated at £6.67 million and reflects many of the developments outlined in this report.

D45 We are not complacent about the ongoing work that we need to do and life will continue to have a degree of uncertainty for some time to come. We are, however, trying to return to a 'new normal' and are putting remobilisation plans in place to ensure that our services restart in a planned way and that our future actions take account of learning from the local and national response to the pandemic. We are reflecting on what has worked well and what has not and will review our plans with our partners and stakeholders to ensure that we have robust plans in place for the future development of health and social care services in West Lothian

D46 Conclusion

This report provides the Board with an overview of the pandemic response in West Lothian. It is anticipated that regular reports will be provided to the Board to reflect any changing circumstances related to the pandemic and as we move forward will remobilisation plans.

E CONSULTATION

None

F REFERENCES/BACKGROUND

None

G APPENDICES

None

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