

## **BATH & North East Somerset Adult Lead Member Report for Children and Adults Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel**

As Lead member of Adult Social Care, I am delighted to welcome our new Director of Adult Social Care, Suzanne Westhead, who started in the post on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2021. Suzanne has a wealth of experience in both the NHS and in Social Care and I am looking forward to working closely with her to improve the lives of our more vulnerable adult residents.

The health and social care system remains under pressure across B&NES, as it is across the country, with increased demand for services and staff shortages. This is continuing to have a significant impact on our Reablement Service provided by Virgin Care and on mental health services provided by AWP and Oxford Health.

As Lead member, I have written to Jacob- Rees Mogg (in his dual capacity as both a local MP and a senior member of the current government) regarding my concerns about staff shortages in frontline social care services and I am due to meet with him to discuss this in more detail.

You will be aware of the recent government announcement on health and social care which aims to address the funding of social care and the crisis in its workforce.

Please see below, a summary of the new Health and Social Care funding announced this week.

### **Social Care Plan**

The Prime Minister has announced the Government's reform package for social care, and increased funding for the NHS from 2022-23:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/build-back-better-our-plan-for-health-and-social-care>

National Insurance Contributions (NICs) for employees and employers will increase by 1.25%. This new "Health and Social Care Levy" will be "hypothecated in law" and will have to be spent on frontline services. The increase in employer's national insurance will cost B&NES £750k next year.

The proposals broadly follow those that were made in the Dilnot Report (2011). There will be a £86,000 "cap" on the maximum that individuals will pay towards their care. This is higher than the "cap" that was proposed by Dilnot (£50,000 revised). It is worth noting that the cap is only on care costs and does not include the accommodation element of residential care so the actual costs incurred will be significantly higher than £86,000.

The assets threshold will increase to £100,000 which is a significant increase on the current £23,250 threshold. Individuals will make no payments for their care if their

assets are less than £20,000, but there will be means testing with graduated contributions if their assets are between £20,000 and £100,000.

Changes will be introduced from October 2023 and will have an impact on the income that local authorities receive from social care clients. Lost income is estimated by the Government at £5.4bn and local government will receive funding for these losses. However, the methodology for distributing the funding will need to be determined. The White Paper says that, "The Government will consult on its proposals for funding distribution and keep this distribution under review". Clearly there is a risk for local authorities that the funding is insufficient to offset the lost income.

Additional funding raised from the tax increases will be used for the NHS (£25bn over 3 years in England) and to fund the costs of social care reform (£5.4bn over 3 years). Although the Prime Minister said, "you can't fix the NHS without fixing social care", there will be very little additional funding for social care to either close the funding gap or to improve care standards. Within the £5.4bn for social care, there will be £500m over 3 years to support the social care workforce.

### **Virgin Care Contract**

B&NES, Swindon & Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BSWCCG) Governing Body and B&NES Council, as joint commissioners, have requested a report setting out an options appraisal to help decide whether or not to extend the Virgin Care contract.

This is a seven-year contract from 2017/18 to 2023/2024 with the option to extend the contract term by three years, taking it's term to 2026/2027. The option to extend the contract in this way can only be taken once. Virgin Care will need to be notified of the decision to extend or not by no later than the end of March 2022.

If a decision is taken to exercise the option to extend the contract term, the Co-ordinating Commissioner (B&NES Council) must give written notice to Virgin Care no later than 24 months prior to the original expiry date (end of year 5, 2021/2022 – March 2022 latest date).

There is no financial penalty incurred by commissioners if the decision is taken not to extend the contract term for this 3-year period. Initial dialogue with Virgin Care has identified their commitment to securing the 3-year extension term and their intention (at this stage) not to renegotiate the financial terms of the funding from BSWCCG and B&NES Council for the 3-year term. They have also indicated a willingness to explore the option for the removal of some services from the contract if the extension is approved

The next Virgin Care commissioning report is due to this panel in October and will concentrate on the key themes of workforce and service user experience.

## Update on Transformation Process

Community health and social care services continue to see increased demand and staff continue to work hard to meet the demand. To ensure that services are sustainable in the future, Adult Social Care are embarking on a significant Transformation Programme focused on delaying the demand for statutory services, ensuring quality service provision, improving outcomes for individuals and reducing spend.

The following workstreams have been identified for the Adult Social Care Transformation Programme to support the delivery of savings in 2022/23:

1. Early Intervention & Community Resilience – workstream lead, Judith Westcott, Senior Commissioning Manager Community Health and Care Services
2. Optimising the Front Door - workstream lead, Helen Wakeling, Principal Social Worker Safeguarding Adults & Quality Assurance Service Manager
3. Social Work Process & Intervention – workstream lead, Karyn Yee-King, Principal Mental Health Social Worker and Service Manager
4. Reablement – workstream lead, Suzanne Westhead, Director Adult Social Care
5. Transitions – workstream lead, Alison Woodiwiss, Senior Commissioning Manager, Complex Care and Targeted Support
6. Community Mental Health Framework - workstream lead, Lucy Kitchener, Commissioning Manager, Mental Health
7. Re-design Liquid Logic - workstream lead, Tony Bartlett, Service Director Financial Control and Pensions

The Adult Social Care Internal Transformation Group (ASCITG) commenced in July 2021 and is chaired by Claire Thorogood - Head of Contracting and Performance. This meeting is held monthly and reports into the Social Care Transformation Board (SCTB) which also commenced in July 2021. The monthly Board Meeting is chaired by Amanda George – Director of Business Change and Customer Services.

Highlight reports are generated by each of the workstream leads and these provide an update on progress being made alongside key risks and challenges. An opportunity to identify project interdependencies with each transformation workstreams and wider interdependencies with Council savings and business as usual service development and improvement projects.

The Social Care Transformation Board highlighted in August, that the lack of recruitment to critical project management roles to build capacity has been hampered the ability to gain momentum and deliver key transformation projects. The Director of

Adult Social Care is in the process of appointing project managers. An appointment has already been made to the redesign of electronic care record (Liquid Logic)

As the cabinet member for Adult Social Care I am committed to ensuring scrutiny of the transformation programme and would be grateful to receive some expressions of interest from members of this panel. Suzanne Westhead and I will be discussing this further with the chair of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny panel in the coming weeks.

14<sup>th</sup> September 2021

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