

Lead Member Update Report – Children’s and Adults Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel April 2024

Adult Services Update

Community Resource Centre

Following the Cabinet decision on 8th February 2024 to cease to operate Charlton House as a nursing home and to enhance the offer in Cleeve Court and Combe Lea Care homes, Charlton house was deregistered at the end of March 2024.

Combe Lea – There are no bed vacancies at Combe Lea. 2 rooms are held as respite or for emergencies as we have seen a steady increase in the need for this type of service over the last few months, with emergency admissions taking place within a few hours. We continue to develop proposals for the use of the day service space at Combe Lea by community partners.

Cleeve Court – Cleeve Court has 12 bed vacancies due to our ongoing recruitment challenges but we are working towards a full staffing establishment with live adverts and several redeployed staff are joining the service. In the meantime, we continue to admit 1 person a week and offer emergency admissions and respite. We continue to develop the use of the space at Cleeve Court by the community, for example, a recent carers engagement event was hosted by Cleeve Court.

Charlton House - The 10 remaining residents all moved successfully to 4 different homes in locations of their choice, all settled well and Charlton House staff undertook at least 2 visits to each of our former residents to ensure that the new placements were working well.

A full staff consultation took place with the 28 staff impacted by the deregistration of Charlton house. 12 staff have been redeployed to other services within the council, 3 staff on nurse apprenticeships have been seconded to partner organisations to complete their training. 5 staff were nearing retirement and therefore a small redundancy payment was made in order that the staff could progress with retirement.

As the services had taken a decision to not provide nursing care in the future, 3 nursing staff received a redundancy payment, all have secured new employment in B&NES nursing care homes. A further 5 staff chose redundancy as opposed to a redeployment option in line with our HR policy.

The building will remain as part of the Adult Social Care portfolio until such time as the hand over to children’s services takes place. Adult services continue to operate the kitchen at Charlton House to provide meals to the extra care and sheltered housing tenants in the local area. The feasibility study looking at requirement scope, costs and programme to remodel Charlton House is currently being carried out and it is expected that the report will be available mid May.

The feasibility report will enable us to give an estimation of timescale for start and completion of works taking into consideration planning consent for change of use of the building, funding approval process, tendering process for the works and the actual build. At this early stage it is anticipated that works could start September 2024 and on the basis of completed DFE registration the new provision could be open for September 2025, but these are provisional dates only at this early stage.

United Care B&NES

The United Care B&NES (UCB) Contract came into effect on the 6th of June 2022 as a two year pilot. The pilot was ended two months early (31st March 2024) by mutual agreement of B&NES Council and the RUH.

The reason for this was because the pilot had achieved what it was set out to do. Firstly, to respond to the lack of local home care provision by filling the gap and support timely discharge from hospital, and secondly, to stimulate the market and enable competition for other home care providers to support the council's framework contract.

All service users of which there were 14 have been provided with alternative care providers and all care packages are working well. Following relevant consultations with staff employed in UCB 3 B&NES staff have been re-deployed to other B&NES services and the 16 staff seconded from RUH staff have all been redeployed in the RUH.

ASC Transfer from HCRG Care Group

On 1 April 2024, ASC Adult Social Work, Direct Payment Team and Adults with Learning Disabilities Day services (based at Carrswood, Twerton and Connections, Radstock) and 237 staff successfully transferred to B&NES Council from HCRG Care Group with no disruption to service users.

As anticipated, the majority of the minor issues reported in week one were IT related. However, these have been responded to quickly as IT have deployed floor walkers at each of the base locations to respond and address issues as they arise. This level of support has worked well and has been well received.

To facilitate the transfer, all managers have been paired with 'buddies' to support and provide guidance with new ways of working in B&NES. There are daily manager huddles set up with the Assistant Director of Operations to raise and resolve any transfer-related issues. Feedback from the transferring staff has included the warm and positive welcome received from B&NES, good levels of support to resolve operational issues and a well planned welcome and induction programme.

On Thursday 4 April, Will Godfrey and Suzanne Westhead spent the day visiting all staff across all sites, this also included the existing Adult Social Care teams.

Waiting Times

On the 24th March 2024 the Health Service Journal (HSJ) published an article regarding waiting times for assessment which stated;

*“Last summer the Department of Health and Social Care collected data from councils for the first time in at least a decade. **Following a freedom of information request by HSJ, figures were released indicating average waits of up to 149 days** in areas such as Bath and North East Somerset. Notably, 25 out of 85 councils reported waiting periods of two months or more. Regions with long delays in care provision, such as Somerset, Liverpool, Sussex, and Cornwall, have also faced issues such as hospital discharge delays and broader NHS challenges. Factors like rural settings, recruitment difficulties, increasing demand and ageing populations contribute to social care and NHS pressures.”*

A link to the full article is below.

<https://www.hsj.co.uk/daily-insight/daily-insight-the-waiting-game/7036862.article#:~:text=Following%20a%20freedom%20of%20information,Bath%20and%20North%20East%20Somerset.>

The figures quoted by the HSJ are now 14 months old and do not represent the current waiting times in B&NES which are:

- Last month 49 people were waiting for a Care Act Assessment by community teams with 41 of those waiting for longer than 28 days
- 37 people were waiting for a Care Act Assessment following a stay in an intermediate care bed or reablement with 21 people waiting for more than 28 days, all people waiting have either interim care in place or have been offered advice and support.
- All people waiting have been risk assessed and prioritised

An urgent piece of work has started that will ensure that our data is accurate and that any people that have been waiting for longer than 28 days are risk assessed and prioritised in line with our risk management tools.

Update on planning application for the Englishcombe Lane Supported Housing

The Englishcombe Lane project is a proposal to develop a 16-home supported housing scheme on land to the rear of 89-123 Englishcombe Lane, Bath. Our vision is to provide an attractive, high-quality scheme which addresses the shortage of supported living provision specially adapted to support adults with autism and learning disabilities and uses sensitive and considered design to respond to the local environment.

This will be a life-changing scheme for its residents, enabling them to live independently with appropriate care and support in their own homes.

Building with Nature guidance has been used to inform the site layout and respond to constraints, working with the site's ecology, hydrology and geology to create a design which has landscape and sustainability at its core.

A two-week period of public consultation on emerging design proposals ran from 11th March to 22 March. It included a well-attended Public Exhibition on 13th March 2024 in St Luke's Church Centre, Bath. The event supported by the Arcadis design group and the housing team attracted approximately 40 residents and other stakeholders interested in this development. Visitors to the event were able to express their thoughts and views on the plans for the site on the day in person and by completing a survey.

The planning application was submitted to the local planning authority for determination at the end of March 2024. This included a whole range of supporting documents, including the outcomes of drainage and flood-risk assessments, ecology appraisals and landscaping strategy. There is a further opportunity for public consultation as part of the formal planning process. Determination of the planning process is expected in summer 2024 (indicative date).

Further information about this development is available on the project website accessible at this link: [Englishcombe Lane Supported Housing](#)

Update Sulis Down and Hygge Park

B&NES' housing team and commissioners from the specialist team have been responsible for overseeing the construction and implementation of two new build Supported Living Developments specially adapted to support adults with learning disabilities and autism, and sourcing the social care provider that will be delivering the support service within the developments. The developments are now nearing completion as follows:

Sulis Down, Bath

Landlord: Bromford

This scheme was completed on 21st March 2024.

Hygge Park, Keynsham

Landlord: Curo

This scheme is due for completion on the 17th April 2024

The social care provider, Affinity Trust, successfully tendered for the contract with an implementation plan that contained a 12-week recruitment timeframe to recruit staff to deliver services within the scheme. As part of this process, the provider plans to skills match their newly recruited care staff with the individuals that they would be supporting. Recruitment is progressing well with most of the team already in place and staff induction and training taking place over the next 5 weeks.

Nominations for the first group of tenants to move into these new flats have been agreed. Social care colleagues, commissioners and Affinity Trust are working with prospective tenants and their families to plan a safe person-centred move into their new home, starting from 7th May 2024. Following best practice tenants will move into their new home in a phased approach and timescales for this are being reviewed by social care and commissioners.

This has been possible thanks to a partnership programme with Bromford, Curo and Affinity Trust with ongoing investment from adult social care and housing to support people to live well and independently within their own communities.

Provision of Minor Adaptations

On Monday, 25th March 2024, I took a single member decision to in-house the Minor Adaptations Service from 1 October 2024 and to facilitate the safe transition of the service through a six-month direct award for the current service.

Minor adaptations are smaller home adaptations that aid personal independence and mobility. They include items such as grab rails, stair rails, ramps, and key safes.

Such provision is covered by the Care Act 2014, with a specific requirement to ensure individuals can access such adaptations free of charge up to a maximum cost of £1,000. As such the local authority has a legal duty to fund this provision.

The service is currently provided by We Care Home Improvements and was reviewed last year in response to rising demand and operational costs, including a significant increase in cost of materials such as steel.

A similar single member decision was taken in 2021, to bring the Community Equipment service back in-house. Therefore, we already have a team of experienced staff with good

knowledge of minor adaptations working within the council. The decision to also bring the minor adaptations service in-house offers opportunities for better commissioning and budget oversight, economies of scale, scrutiny of high-cost referrals and property tenure checks to ensure that we are not providing a service where it is the responsibility of another organisation.

Safe and well-planned transition to new arrangements is essential. Therefore, the current service needs to continue for a further period of 6 months to prepare for safe transfer by 1 October 2024. The budget for the financial year 2024/5 has been set at £261, 949.

Providing the service in-house will offer the opportunity to implement a different operational model, resulting in improved communication with referrers and organisation of orders on receipt. It will reduce cost pressures through economies of scale gained from bulk buying and will increase resilience due to control of costs and operational arrangements. The new model will also facilitate closer working with Waste Services to promote the use of recycling points, whereby both equipment and rails no longer required can be returned and re-used where possible, reducing the volume of new stock required. It will also provide the opportunity to gather residents' feedback more easily to inform further future service improvements.

Community Support Contracts

Community support contracts that deliver a wide range of support and care for B&NES residents will continue to be commissioned under the HCRG Care Group prime provider contract in 2024/25. The new BSW ICB led contract came into force in April and will be jointly monitored by the BSW ICB as the co-ordinating commissioner, with B&NES council and Wiltshire council as co-commissioners, as the new contract also includes services for Wiltshire residents. Robust contract management arrangements have been agreed by all parties and will commence in May.

B&NES portfolio of community support includes services provided directly by HCRG Care Group and services sub-contracted to over 70 community partners, including third sector organisations, GP practices and community pharmacies. Commissioning activity led by the HCRG Care Group as the prime provider has over the past few months focused on issuing and negotiating sub-contracts for each service to ensure continued delivery of support for B&NES residents in 2024/25. These sub-contracts are in the final stages of being signed by all relevant organisations.

Outcome of Budget Consultation

The budget proposal that went to public consultation had contained a £802,000 saving on the £9.3m in community contracts that the council currently supports. The budget approved by cabinet in February was adjusted to smooth out this saving over a two-year period to provide space for these savings to be made carefully, in a targeted way, and in collaboration with community partners as valued partners. This decision was made following a period of extensive engagement with the community partners and full consideration of views expressed by them and other stakeholders during the consultation.

The council has also committed to completing a strategic review of these services, focusing on the value the contracts provide in preventing pressure on the statutory services for which the council is responsible. A new strategic board led by Mandy Bishop, Chief Operating Officer has been set up to provide leadership, oversight, and robust governance to this work alongside other transformation programmes involving community partners. Proactive engagement with community partners is at the heart of this work and next phase of communication is being planned for mid April.

Public Health Update

Schools Health and Wellbeing Survey

Primary schools are being invited to take part in the SH&WS survey during the summer term. To date, 21 primary schools have signed up (35%) with further recruitment planned. Pupils in Year 8, 10 and 12 among participating secondary schools have completed surveys and results for the secondary school's survey are expected in June.

SUDI Prevention Activity

Working in partnership with colleagues across BSW, the **Sudden Unexpected Death in Infants** (SUDI) prevention policy, guidance document and action cards have now been developed and are awaiting ratification by the B&NES Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership. These informative resources will then be circulated across Children's Services and external partner agencies.

Oral Health amongst Children

The Supervised Toothbrush Scheme, delivered by At Home Dental, gives children aged 3-5 years the opportunity to brush their teeth each day when attending schools and nurseries located in the more deprived six IMD 2019 deciles of the South West. To date 63% of eligible schools have signed up to the programme. It is recognised that the eligibility of the scheme excludes a high number of children who would benefit from this programme, and work with NHS England is underway to address this.

Smoking

- In December 2023 we were successful in bidding for 1200 free vape kits to support B&NES smokers to quit and collaborated with BSW colleagues to successfully bid for free vape kits for use in maternity services. Free vape kits are being offered to smokers alongside very brief advice and support to help them on their quit journey. Smokers can access the vape kits through our specialist stop smoking service, AWP in-patients and through our accredited community partners, DHI.
- The Government has allocated each Local Authority additional public health grant during 24/25 to support smokers to quit. The grant is based on a three-year average of smoking prevalence and B&NES has been allocated approx. £200k for this financial year. Alongside the grant are challenging ambitions to increase the number of smokers setting a quit date and successfully quitting. We intend to use the grant to support additional capacity in frontline services to support smokers and to reach out to those least likely to engage.

Food Insecurity

Following the completion of research with the University of Bath on food insecurity amongst older people in B&NES in 2023 we have been awarded a small grant by the University to develop a toolkit to communicate the findings of the research that can be used by town and parish councils and others when thinking about local action on food insecurity.

Whole System Health Improvement Framework

In December and February we led two workshops for the B&NES Whole System Health Improvement framework, which were well attended by partners working in health improvement and community settings across B&NES. The key outputs have been a) agreement as a system to work in a collaborative, integrated way using a whole-systems approach to health improvement, and b) a set of draft priorities which this work will address. We are forming three System Action Groups which will translate priorities into action and help to reach our vision of a strong, healthy, compassionate environment in B&NES.

- **Recognition as training location**

The local authority is delighted to have received “Excellent” as a public health speciality training location by the South West Public Health Training Programme Quality Panel. In addition the Public Health Training Programme in the South West has been rated top in the UK based on the 2023 National Training Survey results.

- **Education attainment gap**

We have started a piece of work to investigate the potential causes of the educational attainment gap between those children eligible for Free School Meals and those who aren't in BANES building on the excellent work done to date. The work will make recommendations as to how a whole systems approach could help contribute. The Project Initiation Document has been shared with Scrutiny and many thanks for the comments received to date.

Strategy to Reduce Serious Violence

The Council has published a strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence, available on [the BCSSP website](#). This takes a ‘public health approach’ as recommended by the Home Office guidance. We are working on the detailed delivery plan for 2024/25.

Tackling Inequalities

A range of local B&NES projects and services funded through the new fixed-term BSW Inequalities funding will all be starting from April. The majority are led by third sector organisations and are focused on our most deprived areas in the district, and also for children with special educational needs, people who are homeless and people living with severe mental illness.

Suicide Prevention

A BSW Suicide Prevention Strategy has been created which is awaiting sign off by the BSW Mental Health Thrive Board.

Leisure Services and Physical Activity

- Following a recent procurement process the current operator of the tennis and golf facilities, Excel has been appointed as the preferred bidder to run both the café and the leisure activities in Royal Victoria Park. Excel has operated the tennis and adventure golf at the park for 23 years and also developed Bath On Ice and Bath on the Beach. Excel proposes major development and refurbishment of the pavilion and café area, on which residents will be asked for their views to help shape the plans
- International Women's Day event at Bath Sport and Leisure Centre on Saturday 2 March attracted over 120 participants. The event was well received and there has been a lot of positive feedback showing real demand for these types of events
- Tennis @ The Park, Bath & Keynsham was the winner of the Park Venue of the Year Award at the 2024 Lawn Tennis Association Awards. This award is a testament to the work of the team at Wesport, who operate the courts on behalf of the council, to improve park playing facilities and get more people active

Cllr Alison Born – Cabinet Lead for Adult Services and Public Health

9th April 2024