

Date 21st March 2024

ADULT SOCIAL CARE

We are continuing to review how Adult Social Care contacts are managed, phase 1 will see Adult Services moving to use the same system as the Customer Service Centre at the beginning of March. This will enable processes to be streamlined and contacts to be passed more smoothly. The second phase of the project will look at how increased triage can take place in the CSC, which will support people to access advice and information more quickly and reduce the demand seen in the Adult Social Care teams, enabling them to focus their efforts on people who have support needs.

The new waiting list prioritisation tool has been implemented which provides a framework to support contacts and those waiting for assessments to be prioritised, to accompany this policy work is being completed to ensure people who are waiting are provided with regular contact and support.

The Community teams continue to work closely with Local Area Partnership teams and other colleagues in their community areas to provide a more holistic and preventative approach. In particular relationships with colleagues in the housing teams are improving and staff are working much more collaboratively to support vulnerable people.

The Adults Learning and Development team is working closely with the WNC legal team to combine their expertise to provide relevant training and guidance for the service. Alongside this, the team are continuing to explore how effectively newly qualified staff and apprentices are supported across the teams and looking at ways to improve the opportunities and support available.

We to continue to review transport options across Adult Services to ensure that we are accessing the most cost effective and sustainable options to meet people's needs.

SAFEGUARDING AND WELLBEING

Our Occupational Therapy Team, led by Steve Campbell, have been leading Integrated Care System Partners in a co-ordinated response to a Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) alert over the safe use of bed rails, bed grab handles and other similar devices that pose a risk of entrapment or falls. This has involved all agencies who have allocated equipment captured within the alert undertaking risk assessments for its current and future use to protect vulnerable residents across West Northants. Given the volume of equipment the alert covers this has been a sizeable task and I thank Steve and his team for their efforts in co-ordinating such a vital piece of work.

On 16th January 2024 cabinet approved a recommendation to commence with the safe closure of Ridgway House, our residential care home located in Towcester. Understandably given the nature of the decision it has attracted a significant amount of attention from residents in the area, many of whom were against the decision to close the home. Decisions of this nature are always difficult; however, we must strive to provide our most vulnerable residents with the best experience of care possible, and unfortunately the outdated facilities available at Ridgway House do not allow us to do this. Following the cabinet decision, we have begun the process of working with residents and families to find suitable alternative accommodation and have commenced formal consultation with the affected staff group.

Our Assistive Technology Team is going through the final stages of disaggregation with completion of this process to take place by the end of March 2024. Assistive Technology is a key strand to the preventative approach we take in Adult Social Care and having a service which focuses solely on meeting the needs of West Northants residents and providing them with ongoing support to remain independent in their own homes is a positive step for the council.

DISCHARGE TO ASSESS (SERVICES)

Health and Reablement Services

The team have faced some challenges over the last few weeks due to Northampton General Hospital declaring a critical incident due to seeing a higher level of admissions and attendances since the beginning of January. Reablement West redesign is working well, has a full complement of staff, supporting a high volume of residents and delivery a higher level of reablement support. Turn Furlong (RIBU) is also working well, seeing really good outcomes from this pathway and flow (length of stay) is going in the right direction. Flow & Capacity Team (FaCT) continue to offer 7-day support to the general hospital and works over and above during critical incident period.

Discharge Fund Allocation

We are in the process of submitting our quarter 4 return against the allocation of funds and below schemes we had in place this year. We are waiting on confirmed of the allocation of funds for the LA and ICB for 24/25.

- £2,212,133 Scheme 1 – Scaling Up Social Care (Pathway 1)
- £1,100,000 Scheme 2 – Scaling Up Intermediate Care (Pathway 2)
- £580,000 Scheme 3 – Introducing Discharge to Assess approach to people with complex needs (Pathway 3)
- £300,000 Scheme 4 – Additional workforce to support the additionality

ARISE (Digital Solution Programme)

Programme remains on track for going live quarter 4 of 24/25 in line with the ending of current contract. The service has awarded to Liquid Logic (case management system) and ContrOCC (Finance management system) and are currently working through the commercial contract with the supplier. The aim is to schedule in project kick off meetings and configuration workshops towards the end of February. The project team have also successfully recruited to specialist consultant roles as per business case to support internal officers with the full implementation

programme. A liquid logic product specialist, ContrOCC product specialist and migration lead will be joining the project team on the 19th February.

COMMISSIONING AND PERFORMANCE

We are very close to fully implementing our new Home Care contract framework and aim to have this fully completed by 31st March 2024. The Team have worked incredibly hard to minimise the disruption to our supported people and to ensure that transfers to new providers are handled sensitively and with compassion. The new contract has been incredibly successful so far, with only minor challenges to be worked through. From April 2023 we will work with our new contracted market to start developing services around their local communities.

There has been a short delay in entering tender for our new Reablement contract, which is now due to go to the open market in March 2024. The new contract will complement our in house reablement service and will help to keep people independent for as long as possible.

We are currently working with our Extra Care Market to design a new service offer for those who chose to have their care and support delivered in secure and specialist accommodation. We aim to bring the current 2 Extra Care contracts into a single framework contract and to extend the offer to those who are under 55 years old. This would allow us to make the most of our Extra Care accommodation while also avoiding unnecessary Care Home admission. The new Framework is due to go live in September 2024.

We will shortly be taking our exciting new Unpaid Carers Strategy to cabinet to seek agreement to consult with the public. The strategy has been co-produced with Experts by Experience to set out the Council's plans for how they will provide the best available support to our unpaid carers who provide such a vital service to their loved ones.

The Quality Improvement Team has seen an improvement in CQC ratings across West Northamptonshire. While 98% of our contracted providers are compliant with their expected contract outcomes, it is always nice to see our hard work reflected in the CQC ratings. There are an additional 5% of providers now rated as good or outstanding, an increase to 70%.

Our Financial Assessment Team has received lots of positive feedback following the implementation of the new online financial assessment form. 95% of all financial assessments are now completed online, and 5% are completed in person. This is a great achievement in a short amount of time.

The Client Funds Team were recently inspected by the Office of the Public Guardian to ensure that people's money is being used in line with their best interests. While we are waiting for the outcome of the inspection, the initial feedback we have received was very positive and we are thankful to all the staff who supported the visit.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Health Improvement & Communities

Stop Smoking Service

The stop smoking service is developing plans to use the additional government funding which has been allocated over the next five years (2024/25-2028/29) to expand locally delivered stop smoking services to increase the number of people who stop smoking. There will be some

flexibility for the funding to support wider tobacco and youth vaping control efforts, such as local awareness raising campaigns, to provide more flexibility at the local level. However, the majority of the funding should be focused on stop smoking cessation. WNC have been given an indicative additional allocation of £478,000. This is on the condition that we do not reduce our stop smoking service budget below its current level. As part of the prevention transformation work the stop smoking service will sit under Wellbeing Services, and a business case has been developed proposing to increase the team to include a team leader, six stop smoking advisors, one stop smoking specialist and a senior administrator. Funding has been allocated to communications and marketing to increase the reach and uptake of the service, with targeted work to reach priority groups (which include people living in areas of deprivation, people with mental health conditions, people who are homeless, people in contact with drug and alcohol services, routine and manual workers, pregnant women).

The Northamptonshire Tobacco Control Alliance is developing the new Tobacco Control Strategy. Vaping in children and young people is a priority for West Northamptonshire at the moment, and WNC is holding a Vaping Summit on 5th February to bring together national experts and local stakeholders to discuss the challenges and develop an action plan to reduce vaping in children and young people.

Weight Management

The current Northamptonshire tier 2 weight management service contracts are due to end in March 2024. Following a review of local needs and the current offer, West Northamptonshire Public Health have identified the need for three different types of services to meet the needs of residents. These are:

- A face-to-face tier 2 weight management service – the successful bidder will be awarded in February.
- A digital tier 2 weight management service – the tender is currently live
- Community services targeting those parts of the West Northamptonshire communities that don't traditionally access such services – which is in the early stages of design. We anticipate a range of different offers to be generated out of this exercise that will build on and develop the work done by Public Health in 2021.

Through all of these services, the Council will be seeking to increase accessibility and take up of the weight management service from those people living in the top 50% most deprived areas: men; people from minoritized communities; people with mental health conditions and people with learning disabilities.

Food for Life

The Food for Life programme in schools has engaged with 18 out of 35 target schools.

- Those enrolled so far are Spring Lane Primary; Vernon Terrace; Kings Heath and Billing Brook Special School; Greenfields; St Mary's Catholic Primary School,
- Those showing positive signs of engaging: Kings Meadow; Hunsbury; St James CofE; Blackthorn; Boothville; St Luke's Church of England Primary; Ecton Brook; Long Buckby Junior School; Thorlands.

As part of the cook and share campaign FFL are giving £100 worth of cooking equipment to three schools, Vernon Terrace, Greenfields, and likely Kings Meadow (once they have completed their enrolment). Vernon Terrace is going to be running an after-school cooking club. Greenfields are linking it to their eco challenges and global change so cooking will be focussing on budget friendly/eco products/impact at KS3, at KS4/5 cooking focusses on accreditation and KS5 also includes cooking as part of their Duke of Edinburgh.

If Kings Meadow go ahead, they are utilising the equipment for the addition of a living space, which is new to the school to allow students to practice life skills in a set up area. The equipment will support the school to be able to do more cooking with the pupils in a home living style space. They hope the children will develop an enjoyment of cooking, finding the experience of cooking fun. Through this the children will have the opportunity to develop skills in cooking, which is an important life skill.

Early years providers are now being contacted – the plan is to work with 10.

Grow, Cook, Eat

The 'Grow, Cook, Eat' project has delivered further training and grants to community organisations and partners to develop local activity. To date 41 local champions have been trained and grants awarded to 15 organisations and projects. The reach of this project has begun to be reported through these groups:

UAA: Allotment Group: 250

Abington Community: 210

Hope (Cooking on a Budget): 110

Sport4Fitness: 240

C2C Men's Cooking Group: 14

Northants Youngers: 40

No Fuss Meals for Busy Parents: 25

Spring Charity: 30

C2C: Project Launch – 80

New Life Amalgamation: 80

The Growing Together: 85

C2C Men's Growing Group: 14

Albanian Cultural Association: 50

Workplace Wellbeing

'Making Every Contact Count' training for all frontline staff has been piloted with Supporting Independence and Adult Social Care colleagues and plans to roll this out across WNC and with wider stakeholders are being developed. This will enable the service to make forward plans regarding supporting frontline workers in delivering health and wellbeing messages and signposting in their day job and so make more of every contact they have with the general public and service users.

The WNC Workplace Wellbeing toolkit is nearing completion which will enable workplaces to review and plan for health and wellbeing needs.

Breathlessness Project

The breathlessness project in Northampton Central LAP continues to develop, and the engagement reports submitted by VCSE partners who have engaged with residents to understand their experiences of managing long-term conditions are being finalised. Voluntary Impact Northampton were the successful bidder to deliver the Community Health Champions programme, with funding available to recruit a volunteer coordinator who will recruit, train and support community champions who will provide links into communities and provide health and wellbeing information. We are preparing to launch a research grant for a partner to evaluation the impact of this innovative programme.

Well Northants

The Well Northants team has recruited a new community development worker to focus on Semilong and Briar Hill. This is in addition to existing workers in Blackthorn, King's Heath, St Davids and Southbrook. A new grants round is currently underway for these areas, and the

community has been invited to vote on which projects they want to fund. Community development workers are also supporting those involved in sex work, Gypsy Roma Travellers and the Eastern European Community. As part of the Eastern European research project the lead is engaging with members of the community alongside a survey to maximise reach to better understand the experiences and challenges, they face in accessing health and social care services.

Health Protection

The team have worked hard to coordinate the mobile vaccination programme, which has continued across the whole West Northamptonshire area, offering flu and COVID-19 vaccinations and more recently, the NHS Health Checks. To date, 49 clinics have taken place, including four events, where 1,438 COVID-19 vaccinations, 1,060 flu vaccinations and 53 health checks have been administered. Five vaccination clinics were held for frontline and social care staff across WNC locations. Clinics held in Northampton, Daventry and Towcester delivered 195 flu vaccinations and 213 COVID-19 vaccinations to 213 staff.

Two health events were organised for people who are homeless, rough sleeping or in temporary accommodation in the Northampton area, offering screening, vaccination and other health and wellbeing services. 87 people attended, and engaged with a range of services, such as sexual health, cervical screening, Hepatitis C, drug and alcohol, oral health, optical, stop smoking, vaccination and health checks. Planning for Spring events is well under way, offering further services.

The team are working with system partners to support systemwide measles elimination and have produced a local elimination plan for West Northampton to address the local needs. They are also working with a number of GP Practices with low childhood immunisation rates to support engagement and initiatives improve up-take.

We have re-established the systemwide TB Network and are leading on a system plan, which includes the development of memorandum of understanding amongst partners to support patient with no recourse to public funds.

Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)

The team have developed the IPC Service Assurance Framework and its associated plan and swabbing pathway. To date, 24 Adult and Social Care (ASC) compliance visits have been completed. The team developed IPC resource packs for ASC and SEND settings. IPC training sessions are in progress, and over 100 ASC staff are now IPC compliant. IPC Champion training materials have been completed and training commenced in January. The team continue to support the management of outbreaks of infectious diseases and weekly updates provided.

Healthcare Public Health

The team have organised, co-ordinated, and delivered 12 NHS Health Checks since August 2023, all of which have been well received. The COVID-19 Impact Assessment has been completed and work on systemwide data sharing agreement and Healthcare Public Health "Core Offer" MOU is nearing completion. Work has commenced on the joint sexual health needs assessment, and the next few months will be busy with procurement of a new NHS Health Check Programme and Sexual Health Services. The [Shared Service Joint Committee](#) approved

disaggregation of the Integrated Sexual Health Service contract from April 2025 on 17th January 2024.

Wider Determinants of Health

Anti-Poverty

HSF - The final tranche of supermarket vouchers has been released with a further staggered uptake following the pattern of the previous releases. Free School Meal vouchers are due to be released to schools and parents next week (29/01) for the February half term. The uptake of the online applications remains low but are working on ways to increase. The team are planning the use of the remaining anti-poverty budget spend with consideration of discontinuation of HSF in the future.

The WorkWell Programme bid was submitted on Monday (22/01/24) with the outcome expected to be received in March.

Built Environment

Planning - We have received the initial draft chapters of the Local Plan to begin work on links throughout to health and wellbeing. The Health Impact Assessment will be undertaken on the draft Local Plan that goes out to consultation this year.

Homelessness - We are working closely with colleagues in Housing to look at the development of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy with a focus on prevention.

Transport – We are working closely with colleagues on the development of the Local Transport Plan to ensure the links with health and wellbeing are considered.

Town and Parish Councils – The development of guidance and an offer of support for Town and Parish Councils to build on their links to health and wellbeing is going well with keen interest from a number of Parishes.

Drug and Alcohol Services

The Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grants continue to support the increase in number of adults and young people in treatment and recovery. There is additional investment into the grant for 2024/25. There is a plan to increase the workforce and numbers in treatment with an ambition of increasing by 10% this coming year.

There has been delay in recruiting to WNC housing support, but this should be resolved in the next quarter.

Confirmation has been received that Individual Placement Support (IPS) funding is being awarded to run for the next two years. The scheme supports people in drug and alcohol treatment into employment.

The service is also taking part in a transformation project to improve the pathways and response to rough sleepers. The SSMTRG currently funds a Homeless Treatment Team which is seeing very positive outcomes. The team is using a new type of medication that is having significant changes in the service user's lifestyle for the better.

A visit from Dame Carol Black, specialist adviser to UK government and Dr Ed Day, national recovery lead and officials from OHID and the Home Office Joint Combating Drugs Unit took place in January. During the visit, Dame Carol met senior public health managers and representatives for the CDP. She was met by Cllr Golby and then visited the Bridge and CGL treatment service. Initial feedback suggested that the visit went well. We will, however, receive further feedback in the next couple of weeks.

Commissioning

Public Health are currently commissioning several drug and alcohol provisions. These are as follows:

- Family Support Provision – Evaluation and moderation was completed w/c 15th January. Contract award letters have now been sent out to providers, with a standstill period in place until the 2nd February 2024. Mobilisation will then be completed ready for a 1st April start.
- Children & Young People Provision (including Youth Offending) - Evaluation and moderation was completed w/c 15th January. Contract award letters have now been sent out to providers with a standstill period in place until the 2nd February 2024. Mobilisation will be completed ready for a 1st April start.
- Detoxification – Evaluation and moderation completed w/c 22 January. Letters of award and standstill period to be completed imminently. Mobilisation will be completed ready for a 1st April start.
- Data Management System – Evaluation and moderation to be completed w/c 29th January. This will be completed via the CCloud system. There are currently two providers on the framework, therefore a quick turnaround is expected. Mobilisation will be completed ready for a 1st April start.
- Drug Deaths Surveillance System – This will be commissioned via the CCloud system by the Commissioner. Informal conversations have been conducted with the provider identified on the framework. This will be moved forward to the w/c 29th January with the intent to start as soon as possible. As this is a specialised provision, there will be minimal providers who will meet the Council's requirement. It is likely that this will be a quick turnaround with a start date as soon as possible.

Northamptonshire's local drug information system (LDIS)

There has been an increase in drug alerts recently with six being reported since 21st October 2023. The LDIS protocol and processes are in place, with a comprehensive Professional Information Network (PIN). A core multi-agency panel has also been established to oversee local drug alerts.

Public Health continue to support complex children and young people who use substances to access support and treatment. This involves working closely with the Children's Trust and other partners to provide a holistic approach to meeting the needs of complex children and young people. Detoxification and rehabilitation provision for those people using substances under the ages of 18 continues to be an unmet need as this is not currently commissioned within the current model. However, this will be considered when redesigning and remodelling drug and alcohol provision for the 2026 re-commissioning.

Contract Management

Change, Grow, Live (CGL) who provide adult drug and alcohol services are being supported by the Commissioner to increase numbers of people into treatment. Numbers into treatment have

been static for some time, with some improvement in recent months. Monthly meetings with the Commissioner have been scheduled with the provider to monitor progression. All other drug and alcohol contracts are performing well and have evidenced some excellent outcomes for people who use drugs or who are in recovery. Quarter 3 contract performance meetings will commence w/c 12th February 2024.

People and Wellbeing

Healthy Ageing

As part of a strategic approach to promoting “healthy ageing” in West Northamptonshire, we are proposing to adopt the World Health Organisation’s “Age-friendly Communities” framework

This will be a key strand of our approach to fulfilling the local strategic ambition of supporting “opportunities to be fit, well and independent” (Ambition 3: In Northamptonshire’s Live Your Best Life Strategy 2023-33).

The Age Friendly Communities approach provides a tried and tested means of enabling local areas to become a better place to age. It includes systematic consideration of the social supports available to people as well as the built environment in which people live. The development process of understanding local assets and needs, listening carefully to older people to understand their perspectives and aspirations, deciding on strategic priorities, and then delivering agreed actions, and evaluating impact, fits well with the LAP approach and priorities already identified in West Northants.

A key aim will be to change the way people think about ageing, and for older adults to achieve a longer, healthier life with meaning, purpose, and a sense of belonging. Discussions with VCSE colleagues via the Older People’s Thematic group have been taking place for many months, and it is proposed to include further engagement on this approach in April 2024 through an activation event hosted by NSport and University of Northampton (as part of the “Move Northamptonshire” initiative). The call to action for older people will be, “Be Active” - physically, socially, cognitively – for a happier, healthy life.

Falls Management Service

Fall Management Service (FMS) is actively engaged in an ongoing development process, striving to meet the unique needs of our clients within their respective environments. Additionally, we are dedicated to educating community groups on effective strategies to reduce falls.

FMS has initiated a comprehensive training program aimed at covering 31 care homes in the West. This program focuses on equipping managers and senior caregivers with the knowledge of when and how to refer clients to FMS, as well as implementing a toolkit designed to mitigate falls in care homes.

Our commitment to efficiency is reflected in our achievement of establishing initial contact with clients within the first week and providing same-day responses to care homes. This proactive

approach ensures timely and effective support for our clients and partners in the ongoing effort to create safer environments and reduce the incidence of falls.

Children and Young People contracts and commissioning

The 0-19 Service Improvement Programme is continuing to result in improved performance in the percentage of 2-2.5-year checks completed on time (the checks focus on developmental milestones and identify children below evidence-based thresholds including personal and social, language and communication, movement and brain development).

The [Shared Service Joint Committee](#) approved disaggregation of the 0-19 Service contract, and related children and young people services, from April 2025 on 17th January 2024. Work is ongoing to re-design and re-procure these services for West Northamptonshire, aligning them with Family Hubs to ensure a coherent 0-19 offer.

Local Area Partnerships

The Terms of Reference for the LAPs was approved by the West Northants Health & Wellbeing Board on 23rd January 2024.

The LAP Website continues to be developed and on 16th January 2024 the West Northants Executive Place Delivery Board agreed to a “soft launch” of Phase 1 for Board members and LAP members. Very shortly the website will also be tested by a client user group, members of whom will be identified through the Town & Parish Councils network. Feedback from that group will be an important step before the website is fully launched to the public in early March. The development of Phase 2 of the website is now in the planning stage.

On 30th January 2024 colleagues from WNC, NNC and NSport are meeting with Sport England in reference to the county being identified as part of their Expansion Programme and the potential to access a share of £250M over the next five years. The local area identified as part of the national programme is in Northampton Central LAP. The learning from this Programme will support the production of an individual Active Lives Plan being developed for each LAP.

Two Connect Northamptonshire projects have been approved. The project to help reduce inequalities for older people will be undertaken in the Northampton North LAP and Rural South LAP areas. The project looking at how to reduce health inequalities for women will take place in Northampton Central LAP.

LAP Highlights:

- 15 bikes were given out to children from two schools in the Rural West LAP area two weeks before Christmas. The children keep the bikes until they have grown out of them and then give them back to the project, where they can choose to have another bike if they would like. The bikes are re-conditioned and the children were taught bike maintenance and taught how to ride safely. The initiative continues to be rolled out.
- In Rural South and Rural East LAPs AI is being used to help support people with dementia and their carers. Robopets are interactive cats which are allocated to appropriate individuals. A full evaluation process has been agreed with the University of Northampton.
- Northampton West and Northampton Central LAPs continue to make progress on identifying support for pupils and their families through their Education Task Groups.

- To help identify and tackle social isolation Rural North LAP has held Friendship Cafes and skills transfer events. Local champions are helping to teach local people who feel digitally unskilled.

Councillor Matt Golby

Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Public Health