

**COUNCIL**  
**14 JANUARY 2021****REPORTS OF CABINET MEMBERS WITH RESPONSIBILITY**  
**– CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADULT**  
**SOCIAL CARE**

---

**Introduction**

1. It gives me great pleasure to be able to bring my report to Council. It continues to be my aim to build on the vision as set out in Corporate Plan. *“It is our priority, working with partners, to ensure Worcestershire residents are healthier, live longer, have a better quality of life and remain independent for as long as possible.*
2. *We will work together with partners and communities to enable Worcestershire residents to make responsible choices when planning their lives to achieve the best possible outcomes. We will enable individuals to become or remain independent, self-reliant and an integrated part of their local communities.”* We have continued to bring direction, balance, and order to this vision.
3. 2020 has been an unprecedented year, with Adults Social Care customers, staff, and providers having to respond dynamically to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, on the most vulnerable of our society.
4. The over 70 population in Worcestershire is estimated to be around 99,500, up from 83,000 in 2014.
5. The increase is largely due to an increase in those in the 70-74 age group due to the ageing of the baby boom cohort, but there have been increases in all older age groups as people in Worcestershire are generally living longer. The number of people in the oldest 75+ age group is projected to increase from 62,500 to 78,000 between 2019 and 2025. People in the oldest age group are likely to have higher needs associated with frailty, comorbidity and living alone. This is an increase of 15,500 people or a percentage increase of 25%. Overall, 23% of our population are now aged over 65.
6. Our vision and strategy will continue to focus on ensuring as many of our vulnerable residents to remain independent, for as long as possible. Some of our main achievements in this area and focus for the next 3 years is detailed later in the report.
7. I must again pay tribute to our carers, during an unprecedented time, when their unique role has been paramount in continuing to ensure those they care for have remained safe and well during the Covid-19 pandemic.

8. There are over 70,000 carers in Worcestershire and unpaid carers perform an exceptional role in our society and increasingly, most of us are likely to assume responsibility for helping to care or support someone close to us at some point in our lives. We become carers when our caring responsibilities exceed normal expectations for a relationship due to the illness or chronic condition of someone close to us. Many people enjoy or derive great satisfaction from their carer role and may acquire new skills and friendships, but carers often unknowingly place their own physical, mental and financial wellbeing at risk of harm without appropriate support.

9. The Council's main support for carers is delivered by Worcestershire Association of Carers (WAC) – which receives around £1.6m to carry out their essential role in assessing carers, supporting individuals and advocating for carers as an invaluable group. WAC immediately stood up to offer proactive and one to one support for our carers and have worked tirelessly, in partnership with Adults Social Care to ensure carers have been supported through this challenging time.

10. Our People Strategy focuses on supporting people to stay safe and remain independent for as long as possible. Protecting people from the experience or risk of abuse or neglect is a key element in achieving this. In 2019/20 (*figures always a year behind*) there were 3921 safeguarding concerns reported of which around 14% met the criteria for a safeguarding enquiry to be completed. The priorities of Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board (WSAB) are:

- **Making the System Work** – continue to oversee the delivery of safeguarding requirements (S42 safeguarding duty, Making Safeguarding Personal and Liberty Protection Safeguards), ensuring that learning is embedded across all services and that the pathways are understood;
- **Joint Working** – build on joint working with other Worcestershire Partnerships to ensure that adult safeguarding issues receive the appropriate strategic ownership and provision across all services; and
- **Wicked Issues** (for example, complex multi-agency issues) – develop the WSAB ability to understand the ‘wicked issues’ which have the potential to have an impact on safeguarding adults with care and support needs.

### **Responding to COVID-19**

11. Adult Social Care has continued to work in partnership with NHS colleagues to promote the “Home First” way of working to ensure we maximise people’s opportunities to return home after a hospital admission. This is continuing to reduce the number of individuals entering long term Residential and Nursing care due to hospital acquired functional decline.

12. Social work teams have seen increases in activity, as people seek support during the pandemic. Social Care staff continue to work proactively to ensure individuals access the care and support they need. Options for support in some areas remain curtailed due to the need for services to be Covid-19 safe but alternatives are being identified where possible.

13. Work also continues to analyse the resilience of the care market in Worcestershire and to plan appropriate support and mitigate the risks identified.

14. The Council has financially supported its suppliers during the peak of the COVID-19 Crisis and our services are adapting to new ways of supporting people, which meets the guidelines of social distancing and greater personal protection. Inevitably this brings about changes for customers, which they are being supported to adapt to; e.g. buildings-based services can no longer admit as many people as before and remain Covid-19 safe. Services are therefore engaging with our customers to bring forward different opportunities for supporting them.

15. Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, intensive work has taken place to support care homes to put in place effective infection prevention and control measures. The “Worcestershire Care Home Hub” was established at the outset of lockdown to strategically lead, co-ordinate and facilitate action across the system, to support care homes and prevent infection during Covid-19, and it will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. The joint working across Adult Social Care, Worcestershire Public Health, Public Health England, the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and other health partners enables pooling of capacity and resources, using a proactive and supportive methodology, in order to minimise the number of homes experiencing an outbreak and reduce the absolute number of cases and deaths.

### **Key Areas of Success**

16. Adult Social Care have continued on their journey of transformation, during the pandemic, which is a credit to the new Strategic Director for People, her management team and the staff across the service. Over the last 12 months we have:

- Launched the new **Community Reablement** Service, ensuring people are supported and enabled to remain at home, for as long as possible.
- Implemented the national requirements of “**Home First**” and reablement offer being provided to everyone at point of hospital discharge.
- **Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DOLS)**: The number of high priority DOLS requests waiting to be assessed has begun to reduce.
- Good progress continues to be made towards our target of having 650 people in **supported living** accommodation by the end of the financial year.
- There has been a **drop in admissions to permanent residential and nursing care** homes of 216 fewer admissions comparing September 2019 to September 2020.
- As placements in permanent care homes have fallen the number of **people receiving domiciliary care** in their own homes has risen.
- **Budget**: for the first time for several years, Adult Services is **forecast to break even** by year end – this is due to a concentrated and focused effort including:
  - Tighter control on overall spend and managing accountability
  - Changed entry pathway into residential/nursing care and increase in people returning home with support
  - Decrease in projected numbers of people coming into the care system on a long-term basis

## Looking Ahead

17. As Adults Social Care became part of the new People Directorate, we have strengthened our relationships across Worcestershire Children First, Community Services and Public Health and this underpins our vision with a clear strategy for Worcestershire's People and Communities, under three key pillars of change.

18. Our **Person-Centred Approach** ensures we place people at the heart of what we do across People Directorate, the council, and with partners - to enable and empower people to live the life they wish through a new operating model, appropriate training and assurance.

- a) We are building on our Here2Help offer and developing an integrated customer wellbeing model, across all services/offers: face to face & digital offer;
- b) We are embedding a Think Local Act Personal ethos; information, advice and guidance based; self-reliance, self-directed and self-assessment approach which is relationship based;
- c) We are developing formal partnerships with key stakeholders, community and voluntary sector to promote wellbeing and reduce health inequalities based on our strengths-based approach; and
- d) We are developing locality based integrated teams for social care with health, district council and voluntary sector that focus on the customer to ensure we have visibility of needs and risks in one place and offer long term management for some customers.

19. We are **Shaping our Services** with a focus on all age approaches and choices for people to remain well and independent.

- a) We are increasing our Shared Lives and Supported Living placements;
- b) We are adding to our day centre resources by creating a wider set of support into offers for independence, choice and wellbeing;
- c) We are working with Worcestershire Children First and health partners to develop an all age offer for people with disabilities, aged 0-25;
- d) We are on track to deliver Adults Mental Health Social Care directly, in collaboration with NHS and other partners to prevent and reduce Mental Health crises;
- e) We have implemented a single reablement model that will fit into a longer term integrated intermediate care model; and
- f) We have launched, in partnership with University of Worcester, a Community Support Programme. This will provide start up investment funding to develop and run up to 9 centres for people with Dementia and their carers, across each of the six districts in Worcestershire. £620,000 has been identified for allocation over the next 3 years of up to £60,000 for each centre awarded.

20. We are working closely with providers and engaging with them to develop independence and choice through our **Shaping and Effective Market** theme. Bringing focus to whole population commissioning not just those who access “services”.

21. The care market is expected to shrink over the next few months and years as people and providers adjust to the COVID-19 and post COVID-19 world. Occupancy levels in some care homes are currently low and there is a trend for more people requesting care at home.

- a) We want to retain this focus on enabling people to live independently, at home, for as long as possible and are re-focusing the use of residential and nursing care;
- b) We plan to invite tenders from the market in the next few weeks for reablement focused domiciliary care so people can recover from ill health;
- b) We are re-defining our replacement care offer through clear policy and range of responses;
- c) We will continue to embed the effective use of enablers to independence, building on the success of our approach to Assistive Technology; and
- d) We are increasing the use of Direct Payments and Personal Assistants.

### **Looking Forward to a Few Strategic Priorities Over the Next Two Years**

22. There is general consensus that the only viable solution to the rising demands for care must be a national funding solution; it is very disappointing that no progress has been made on this topic during the course of the year. I do understand that it has been very hard for the Secretary of State to concentrate on the funding issue, while engaged in a global pandemic crisis but I do hope that after this is resolved; we see a speedy green paper consultation which will resolve not only the funding of councils social care responsibilities but also to resolve how individuals should pay for care – I still believe we need to encourage people to plan for their care needs in the same way that they plan for their pensions and not face catastrophic costs that intensive levels of care can cause.

23. We have embarked on an ambitious programme of partnership with our health, district council and community/voluntary sector partners. This will see us apply to become accredited as an integrated care system which enables a focus on improved wellbeing, tackling health inequalities, making best use of the Worcestershire resources we have in a coordinated way, and ultimately deliver better outcomes for residents.

24. I would just like to thank all our staff for their help and support over the year.

### **Adrian Hardman**

Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care