



Adult Social Care

Local Account

2021-2022

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The Local Account is...

...Worcestershire County Council's annual magazine about Adult Social Care. It sets out our priorities and includes case studies from our residents, carers, partners and staff – demonstrating how collaborative approaches have triggered change and improvements.

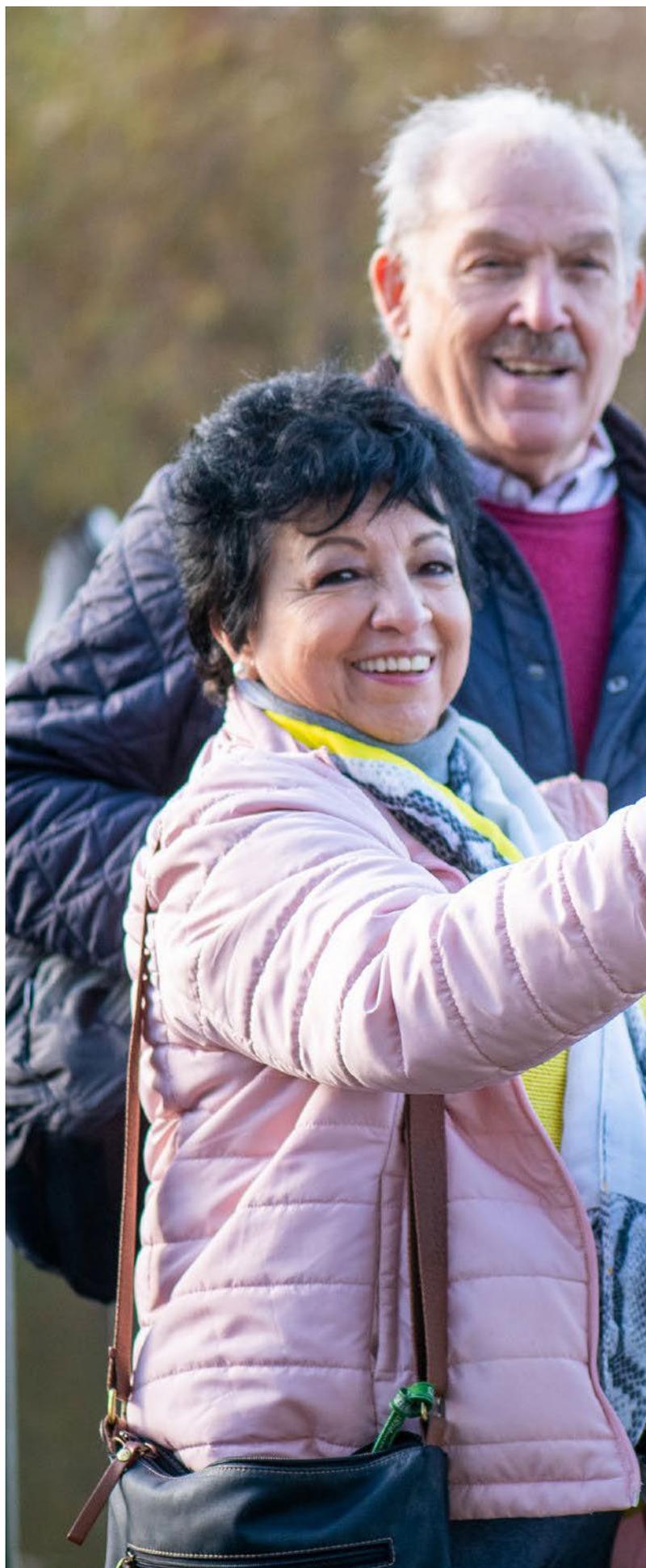
Adult Social Care is part of the People Directorate, with a priority to ensure, with support from our partners, "Worcestershire Residents are healthier, live longer and have better quality of life and remain independent for as long as possible..." continues to underpin everything, we do.

In 2020 we have focused on supporting residents through the pandemic whilst continuing to develop services to support people's independence. We are now focusing on developing new ways of working, learning from the pandemic, and working with partners to develop a more integrated way of working together. In 2021/22 we will remain focused on ensuring we develop with the care market to ensure value for money and support people to be as independent at home as possible, increasing the availability of suitable housing such as extra care and shared lives.



Councillor Adrian Hardman

Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care



Our Vision for transforming Adult Social Care in Worcestershire



Recognised as a key Corporate Priority, is Worcestershire County Council's vision to ensure:

“Worcestershire residents are healthier, live longer, have a better quality of life and remain independent for as long as possible.”

We are working with partners to provide the framework, support, and guidance to enable more adults to live healthy, independent lives and be active for as long as possible, while also ensuring we can provide the best support that people need in times of crisis.

Adult Services in Worcestershire is on a transformation journey to ensure the best outcomes for our residents, in line with our core adult social care functions and ensuring best value. We have become part of the People Directorate with key priorities to:

- Empower Communities by ensuring the right information, advice and support are in place, easily accessible and people and communities become more resilient and self-reliant.
- Person Focused Services developed through collaboration and building on the strengths and capabilities of local communities - ensuring that we make every conversation count consistently across the County's public sector.
- Evidence Based Decision Making to ensure that services and support are shaped to meet the needs of Worcestershire's residents and is responsive to the needs of different communities.
- Increase Healthy Life Expectancy of our residents by reducing health inequalities, so people live independent, healthy lives for as long as possible.
- Improve People's Health and Wellbeing by maximising our local cultural, communities and heritage offer.

The People Strategy

WCC People's Directorate and its partners will co-produce ways of working with citizens to enable them to:

Be Well

Be Connected and Independent

Be Supported and Safe

"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."

Person Centred Approach

HOW

- Develop one People front door for our residents
- Ensure strong digital offer
- Build on strengths of local community assets
- Collaborative work with partners



WHAT

- Develop integrated customer model, across all People services/offers: face to face & digital offer - with Libraries as Community Hubs.
 - Embed Think Local Act Personal ethos; information, advice and guidance based; self reliance, self directed and self assessment embedded.
 - predictive modeling led
 - incorporate Here2Help learning
 - social marketing
 - include prevention offers from Trading Standards about scams and frauds
 - include all arts and cultural activities and access to employment and training
- Lead and implement a full person centred ethos 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.
- Develop formal partnerships with key stakeholders and community and voluntary sector to promote wellbeing and reduce health inequalities based on asset based approach; including community engagement in key wellbeing activation.
- Develop locality based integrated teams for social care with health, district council and voluntary sector that focus on the customer, have visibility of needs in one place and offer long term management for some customers.
- Establish with Clinical Commissioning Group Transparent and Fair Funding Arrangement for People with Health and Social Care Needs.

Shaping Services

HOW

- Life course approach.
- Make “strengths” based conversations the norm.
- Redirect resources to independence and enabling.



WHAT

- Increase Share Lives Placements
- Convert day centre resources into offer for independence choice and wellbeing
- Re-purpose internal care home provision for housing with care
- Commission and remodel respite
- Implement single reablement model that can fit into a longer term integrated intermediate care model
- Create single commissioning team in People Directorate
- Align Public health services e.g. 0-19, sexual health services in framework with health to focus on improvement to outcomes and wellbeing
- Ensure community safety demands can be met via the integrated customer offer, including reporting and access to support e.g. Domestic Abuse.

Shaping an Effective Market

HOW

- Engage to develop independence and choice
- Work with partners to create an integration framework
- Commission for the whole population not just those who access “services”



WHAT

- State commissioning intentions clearly to the market
- Refocus use of domiciliary care
- Consider Family care opportunities
- Increase extra care
- Increase supported living
- All age disabilities independence offer
- Define respite offer through clear policy and range of response Increase use of DP's and PA's
- Embed effective use of enablers to independence e.g. Assistive Technology, access to training, volunteering, travel support, employment, housing and advice to self funders.

Our Core Functions:

- Assess and meet Care Act 2014 eligible need and commission and deliver services that meet that need directly or through the independent and voluntary sectors.
- Prevent, reduce, and delay the need for care.
- Engage with the market to ensure that they are aware of and can meet current and future needs
- Ensure a robust safeguarding system to protect vulnerable adults.

Our Purpose and Principles:



Our purpose is to ensure that Adult Services' provision, across the County Council, NHS and partners provides the framework, support, and guidance to enable more adults to live healthy, independent lives and be active for as long as possible – whilst ensuring we can provide the best support that people need in times of crisis.

This will be underpinned by our principles to ensure we:

- Promote independence through prevention, reduction, and delay of demand in care.
- Keep people safe and promote wellbeing
- Shape and manage the external market and internal service provision to ensure commissioning of effective and sustainable solutions.
- Efficiently use and manage our resources
- Provide advocacy and support for people's rights, protection, and equality
- Recognise, support, and equip our staff to improving outcomes and quality of life for our residents – through continued best practice, learning and development.

This account will provide you with more information on some of the work we have been doing to achieve this, throughout the last year, and during the pandemic.

Adults Social Care During the Covid-19 Pandemic

Adults Social Care in Worcestershire, in partnership with our Council colleagues quickly and effectively responded to the unprecedented circumstances of the Coronavirus pandemic, which resulted in a fundamental change to our customer and demand landscape and the way our workforce could operate, when lockdown was introduced in March 2020.

Care Homes and Supported Living residences in Worcestershire were closed to visitors and our day services and replacement care provision for people to have breaks, were closed to admissions.

The initial focus was to ensure Worcestershire's residents with care and support needs, living at home or in care home setting, and carers were supported. Our care homes were supported through the provision of protective equipment, information, advice and guidance and all efforts were focused on keeping as many people living in their own homes safely, whilst also ensuring people had a safe place to live when being discharged from hospital that met the infection control guidelines. We established hotel accommodation for those who could not return safely home and worked closely with our District Council colleagues to offer temporary accommodation for people who were homeless and rough sleepers.

All people who were known to Adult Social Care, were quickly assessed and risk stratified by social work teams, and measures were put in place for those at greatest risk due to the changes in their care and support and levels of vulnerability they were experiencing. We offered regular welfare checks by phone, worked closely with colleagues at Worcestershire Association of Carers to ensure carers were supported, and looked at all alternative services available for those unable to attend their regular respite or day service.

Adult Social Care continually reviewed the situation to ascertain if we could continue to fully fulfil the Care Act 2014 duties. Local Authorities were able to consider Care Act 2014 easements, should the situation have reached a position where Local Authorities could not meet all of the duties within the Act due to the pandemic, and should only have been considered as a last resort. This was carefully monitored by the Director for Adult Social Services and her leadership team on a weekly basis, and we are delighted to confirm we continued to meet our duties and the demand throughout the pandemic and no easements were ever used.

The Council quickly established their "Here2Help" offer, with a 7 day a week telephone call centre and 24/7 online access to advice, information and local volunteer support, to help those further with day to day activities, including shopping and collecting medication.

Adult Social Care worked in partnership with NHS colleagues to deliver the principles of the Discharge to Assess model and "Home First" agenda for those leaving hospital, aiming to return 95% of people to their usual place of residence. We invested in additional resources to ensure that during the peaks of demand people were supported to leave hospital as soon as possible with reablement support, and if home was not an option, there were beds available in care home settings that could meet their needs in the short term. Care Homes, Extra Care and Supported Living environments were and continue to be fully supported throughout the pandemic, both through the issue of PPE and coordination and provision of vaccinations, for staff and residents, in partnership with local NHS colleagues.

Worcestershire's Adults Services also coordinated and offered priority vaccinations to the whole of Worcestershire front line social care workforce – from domiciliary care workers through to personal assistants and unpaid carers

Some of our day centres for individuals with more complex needs re-opened in July 2020. Consideration is being taken to re-open all provision subject to full risk assessments and confirmation that social distancing can continue to be provided to ensure our service users and staff can be kept safe.

Our priority has and will continue to be to keep our residents safe, well and supported as lockdown restrictions ease, by continuing to work in partnership with our NHS colleagues and wider care providers in Worcestershire. We will remain focused on improving options to support people in their own homes, increasing the availability of suitable Extra Care and shared lives schemes and only considering residential care when there is no alternative available to meet a person's needs.

Celebrating Success

Three Conversations – Strength based approach to Social Work.

This approach was first launched in 2017 through innovation sites to promote strength based social work that focused on better outcomes for people, by:

- listening better to the concerns and views of the adults and families we are working with
- removing barriers to accessing social work advice and support regardless of what that need is
- improving the experiences of the adults, focusing on all areas of wellbeing, being creative in solutions to support people
- making better use of the networks and resources available in local communities that may be of benefit
- creating a better working environment and more satisfying role for staff
- better delivery against the spirit of the care act and core social work values
- encouraging more direct collaboration between the social work teams, health partners, voluntary agencies, and District Councils.

As part of the new People strategy and to ensure the core principles of the Three Conversation Model are well embedded in all we do, we have launched 'Building Strengths' a new project to further develop and embed the promotion of people's independence. This can be providing support to maintain or regain their independence and wellbeing, following what has been a really challenging year for many people who have had to cope with changes to the way their support is delivered, reduced contact from family, friends, and communities. Our focus for Adult Social Care is to provide the care and support necessary for people to remain at home wherever possible, removing inequalities in care, working in partnership with system partners to ensure we deliver this as effectively and efficiently as possible.

At the heart of the approach are three distinct conversations which are used to understand what really matters to people and families, what needs to happen next for them and how we can best assist using early intervention, preventative work, good community connections, supporting people at times of crisis and co-producing good quality support plans where these are required. The model aligns to core social work values. Below is a quote from a social worker who recently attended a workshop.

"I loved this training. Made me think of the old days being a social worker and how something so little can actually make a massive difference. We tend to forget that now and then!"

Adult Mental Health

In recognition of the specialist nature on mental health social work, Worcestershire County Council's (WCC) Cabinet took the decision in September 2020 to internally deliver adult social care mental health services with effect from 1st April 2021. We wanted to strengthen social work practice and focus on developing skills that are needed to support people with mental health conditions to stay well, engage in the community and improve their opportunities. WCC's newly formed mental health service is now focussed on embedding the strength based Three Conversation approach to support people with complex mental health needs and people who are subject to the mental health legislation including supporting local in-patient services, forensic services and step-down provision. The management of Mental Health Act Assessments will be undertaken by a dedicated Approved Mental Health Professional (AMPH) Hub, likewise there will be a specialist Forensic Worker and Safeguarding Lead. WCC also continues to invest resource in employment to support service users to enter or stay in work.

Social Workers have reported:

“...It feels as though it has more of a social work identity, and there is much more focus on us developing our professional practice and doing so in a reflective manner...”

“I actually feel excited to be part of a new team, where we can all support one another to shape the service going forward... The opportunity to continue to work closely with our NHS colleagues, to me, means that I can enable service users to receive the support they need. I feel increasingly optimistic about the future for the mental health team and my apprehension about my professional future in mental health has significantly reduced. I feel that this is a result of a supportive management team and friendly and supportive colleagues. I feel that as a new team we have so much to do, and so many options to discuss and this has given me a renewed passion for my role as a social worker...”

Carers

A Carer is anyone, including children and adults who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support. The care they give is unpaid (NHS Definition).

A young carer is a young person aged between 7 and 17 and a young adult carer is a young person aged between 18 and 25 with a caring role at home. The caring role could be for a parent, a sibling, or a grandparent due to illness, disability, physical or mental health difficulties or substance misuse.

Do you provide any of the following unpaid support to a relative, partner or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental ill-health or substance misuse problems?

- Emotional support
- Medical care
- Personal care
- Physical care
- Domestic Tasks

If you do, then you are a carer. If you would like information and support regarding your own well-being, assessments you are entitled to or how your support needs can be met, please contact the Worcestershire Carers Hub on 0300 012 4272. The opening hours are Monday to Friday 9am to 7pm and 9am to 12pm on Saturday.

- Alternatively, you can talk to us via the web chat facility in the bottom right-hand corner of the website during our opening hours.
- If it is an emergency, please follow this link on our website <http://carersworcs.rit.org.uk/emergency-planning>
- Website address: Worcestershire Association of Carers (carersworcs.org.uk) - contact us using the self-referral form.

There are **66250** unpaid carers in Worcestershire. There is support, information, and advice available to help you with your caring role from the Carers Hub. This is provided by Worcestershire Association of Carers (WAC).

In April 2021 there were **11,957** unpaid Carers on Worcestershire's Carers Register with WAC.

During the Covid Pandemic WAC:

- Extended the Carers Helpline - opening hours were extended to support carers.
- Completed welfare checks via phone calls, zoom, webchat, WhatsApp video call etc to 'check in' with Carers to see how they were doing and assist with any queries or issues.
- Carers can call WAC anytime via the helpline, webchats or email with any issues relating to Covid 19 or other caring related queries or issues.
- Proactive calls to groups to ensure Carers with specific caring responsibilities felt supported, for example Carers of individuals with mental health conditions and people with dementia.
- Many carers are also working as well as having caring responsibilities. Different pressures were felt such as furlough, redundancy, reduced hours etc, so Working Carers were supported to help maintain a balance of their caring role and work.

Success with volunteers

WAC have many volunteers who assist them. 115 volunteer hours are provided by volunteers each quarter. This is 598 hours over the course of last year.

Working for Carers

Worcestershire County Council has signed up to the 'Working for Carers Charter'. The accreditation recognises a commitment to creating a carer-aware workplace. This means the Council is committed to recognising and understanding the needs of carers in the workforce, by supporting staff who are carers at home.

- 3 in 5 people become carers at some stage of their lives and many must juggle their role with a job
- 1 in 7 members of the workforce is a working carer.
- Carers can often feel burnt out and stressed as finding time to take a break can be impossible for those with caring responsibilities. Supporting the carers in the workforce is 'good for the employees and it's good for businesses.'

Engagement and Co-production in Practice

Here are two examples of how Worcestershire County Council has worked with stakeholders and partners to understand the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on people with care and support needs.

Speakeasy Now – People’s Parliament



Members of the People’s Parliament in 2018

Speakeasy Now is a user led organisation of people with learning disabilities in Worcestershire speaking up for themselves. Supported by funding from Worcestershire County Council, they organise an annual “People’s Parliament” to debate key issues and ask for pledges from partner organisations to bring about improvements.

The People’s Parliament recently carried out work to understand the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on people with learning disabilities. Extensive engagement took place and online meetings were well attended by their members and partner organisations.

The online debate was successful in understanding four big issues that were identified for people with learning disabilities and for them to share their experiences. Pledges were secured from organisations who agreed to take actions forward to address the issues.

The four Big Issues:

1. **Raising Awareness about why people with learning disabilities are vulnerable.** Making sure that people with learning disabilities receive the same priority as other vulnerable groups
2. **Getting information that is easy to understand.** Helping people with learning disabilities to access online information
3. **Getting informal support from our communities.** How can people with learning disabilities be included in community groups and activities?
4. **Helping people with learning disabilities reduce health risks such as obesity and Type-2 diabetes.** How do we help people with learning disabilities to understand these risks and how they can help themselves?

For more information on the work of People's Parliament please visit:

www.speakeasynow.org.uk/our-work/peoples-parliament

In the words of Sam Sinderberry, Chair of People's Parliament:

“It’s important to get our voices heard so that we can improve the lives of people with learning disabilities. We look forward to working more with the council in future.”

The Autism Partnership Board

The Autism Partnership Board has representation from autistic people, carers and stakeholders with an interest in Autism.

In April 2021 we held a focussed meeting on understanding the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on autistic people. Organisations that support autistic people gave feedback on the experiences of people who access their services.

Key themes raised included:

- The impact on physical and mental health and the increased risk around suicide
- The positives found from online forums but also the impact only being able to engage online has had on many people with autism
- The impact on people who have not been able to access/continue to access the same level of services they had before the pandemic.

The feedback gave such valuable information that will help inform Health and Social Care strategic plans over the next few years and is supporting Public Health to draft the COVID recovery plan for Worcestershire.

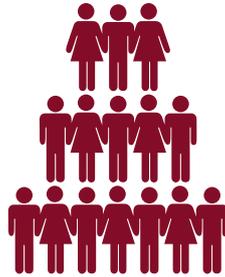
Performance Matters

The demand for Adult Social Care rises each year as people live longer and there are more people living with complex long-term conditions. Adult Social Care faces ongoing demographic and budget challenges, but the care sector also brings millions of pounds to Worcestershire's economy – together, we are working hard to keep people living independently.



24100

enquiries received



33000

people employed in Worcestershire's Health and Social Care Sector



66250

carers providing unpaid care to family and friends



6700

People in receipt of services funded by Adults Social Care

Proportion of people (65+) who are still at home 91 days after discharge from reablement services:

- 82% Worcestershire
- 82% England average
- 81% West Midlands average

People who use services say these services have made them feel safe & secure

- 93% Worcestershire
- 87% England average
- 87% West Midlands average

Number of people in Supported Living

- 663 in March 2021

Percentage of adults with a learning disability in paid employment

- 5.0% Worcestershire
- 5.6% England average
- 4.2% West Midlands average

Area for improvement (Percentage of adults receiving direct payments):

- 23.6% Worcestershire
- 27.9% England average
- 28.4% West Midlands average

Partnership Working

Integrated care – what is it, and what does it mean for Worcestershire

Integrated care is about giving people the support they need, joined up across local councils, the NHS, and other partners. It removes traditional divisions between hospitals and family doctors, between physical and mental health which, in the past has meant that too many people experienced disjointed care.

Integrated care systems (ICSs) were first developed in England in 2018. These new partnership arrangements between the NHS, local councils and other important strategic partners such as the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector are new partnerships between these organisations that meet health and care needs across an area, to coordinate services and to plan in a way that improves population health and reduces inequalities between different groups.

By developing better and more convenient services, investing in keeping people healthy and out of hospital and setting shared priorities for the future, the integrated care system enables decisions about how services are arranged to be made as closely as possible to those who use them.

The NHS was set up primarily to provide treatment for acute illness, but it now needs to deliver joined-up support for growing numbers of older people and people living with long-term conditions. As a result, the NHS and its partners need to work more closely together by providing more care in people's homes and the community and breaking down barriers between services. Together we have the potential to drive improvements in health and tackle health inequalities across Worcestershire by working closely together and with other partners to address social and economic determinants of health. Evidence consistently shows that it is the wider conditions of people's lives – their homes, financial resources, opportunities for education and employment, access to public services, and the environments in which they live – that exert the greatest impact on health and wellbeing.

Our involvement is essential to drive meaningful improvements in health and wellbeing and brings three key benefits. The first is the opportunity to join up health and social care at all levels, creating better outcomes and a less fragmented experience for patients and users. The second is the potential to improve population health and wellbeing through the leadership of public health teams as well as NHS and local government acting together to address wider determinants of health such as housing, local planning, and education. Finally, the involvement of local government can enhance transparency and accountability through supporting engagement with local communities and providing local democratic oversight.

Collaborating across the NHS and local government is not easy and requires local leaders (including NHS leaders as well as officers and elected members in local government) to better understand each other's challenges, to recognise and respect differences in governance, accountabilities, funding, and performance regimes, and to find ways to manage these differences.

With our health colleagues, Worcestershire County Council will begin to work towards greater integration of services for the benefit of our residents. We will tell you more of this journey in next year's annual report.

Working in Partnership to help people to go home from hospital

Worcestershire County Council's social work teams developed a joint health and social care hospital discharge team with Worcestershire Health and Care Trust and Worcestershire Acute Trust to reduce the length of time people remain in hospitals, with a focus on ensuring as many people as possible return home and live independently. The joint social work and nursing team, known as the Onward Care Team, has been in place since February 2020 at both the Alexandra Hospital and Worcester Royal Hospital and work is underway to review the effectiveness of this model on patient outcomes and effectiveness of discharge flow. This model is recognised as good practice nationally and has already seen reductions in people leaving hospital and being dependent on long term social care. The investment in more Reablement Services to support people to return home and be as independent as possible is a key priority. A short period of bed-based rehabilitation in a community hospital is

also an option, alongside making sure that for a very small number of people who are not able to return home and require a period of assessment in a care home, can be discharged to a suitable place to meet their needs in a timely manner.

NHS England's guiding principle of a 'Home First' approach, promotes returning home with support at home or intermediate care, having any further assessments needed within their own homes. Implementing a Discharge to Assess model, where going home is the default pathway (with alternative pathways for people who cannot go straight home) is more than good practice – it is the right thing to do.

Using the Home First Approach, at its highest point we were able to discharge 96% of people back to their usual place of residence. We are now working together to learn lessons from the pandemic to shape the future models and ways of working.

Domestic Abuse Bill

Worcestershire County Council is making plans to implement the new statutory duty in the Domestic Abuse Bill 2021. We have formed a multi-agency commissioning partnership to include West Mercia PCC, Worcestershire Children's First (WCF), People Directorate, Public Health, L&D and District Housing officers to design a system of support and safe accommodation to improve outcomes for adults and children who are victims of domestic abuse in Worcestershire.

This will mean re-shaping some of our existing services and streamlining referral pathways to ensure there is a more effective route through the system for people requiring emergency support and refuge to being accommodated in safe, sustainable accommodation.

We will be including a specialist role to support adults with health and care needs affected by domestic abuse while continuing to support the Family Safeguarding Service in WCF, which is helping to prevent children being placed in care as a result of domestic abuse in their family.

A wider multi agency training offer will be made available to all social work professionals in adults and children's services in the future to improve their knowledge and skills working with families affected by domestic abuse.

Worcestershire also commissions a perpetrator programme working closely with the independent domestic violence advisors to enable more in-depth support for some families with particular needs.

Did you know?

- **50.7%** of those suffering from Domestic Abuse stated that the abuse had got worse since the pandemic began
- **17%** of the crimes committed in West Mercia were offences of Domestic Abuse in 2018/2019
- According to the Office of National Statistics, between January-June 2020, there were **64 domestic homicides** in the UK, a **15.1% increase** from 2019.
- **50% of domestic homicides** in West Mercia between 2014-2019, were in Worcestershire
- **2.3 Million** people experienced Domestic Abuse nationally between 2019/20.
- Between 2016-2019 the rate in repeat victims went from **18.8% - 23.9%** as recorded by West Mercia Police
- In 2019, **25,500 households** lost their accommodation due to Domestic Abuse in the UK
- Between April 2020 and December 2020, **51 households** presented as homeless in Worcestershire as a result of Domestic Abuse

What is Domestic Abuse?

Domestic Abuse is defined as an incident or pattern of incidents that consists of controlling, coercive, threatening, manipulative and sometimes violent behaviour, including sexual abuse. This can occur between current or ex partners, or between family members or carers.

Domestic Abuse can include but is not limited to:

- Psychological/emotional abuse
- Physical and/or sexual abuse
- Financial and economic abuse
- Stalking and harassment

All of which are underpinned by coercive and controlling behaviour, that isolates, intimidates, degrades and controls using the threat of physical or sexual violence.

Domestic Abuse is not always visible, physical violence does not happen in isolation without the above behaviours usually presenting themselves in the first instance. Therefore, spotting the signs before it escalates and responding in a non-judgemental way is paramount to supporting survivors.

Domestic Abuse affects women disproportionately. Official figures record that, at present, 2 women a week are killed in the UK as a consequence of Domestic Abuse and that this figure has increased in recent years.

What can we do to reduce Domestic abuse?

- Have an awareness of what Domestic Abuse is and how housing can protect those in need
- Be able to recognise and spot the signs of Domestic Abuse
- Offer an appropriate support package to those suffering from Domestic Abuse
- Engage in Domestic Abuse training to enable us to respond in an informed way

How do we work to support the victims of domestic abuse today?

The Council works across multiple agencies in the support of victims of domestic abuse and the rehabilitation of perpetrators of abuse. We have a **Domestic Abuse Housing Co-ordinator** for Worcestershire who has extensive history working in the Domestic Abuse sector and has a wealth of expertise to share by providing training, supporting housing officers and providing a link between housing and other specialist services.

West Mercia Women's Aid is one of our lead providers of specialist support to victims of Domestic Abuse in Worcestershire, for example, they currently run a temporary housing project, providing support to victims of Domestic Abuse that have fled an abusive relationship and who are placed in temporary accommodation.

Worcester Community Trust (WCT) employs Domestic Abuse Champions who have specialist knowledge of domestic abuse, support options and signposting, befriending individuals as they settle into permanent accommodation. They provide support in accessing other community services, such as clubs, interest groups, volunteering opportunities and job coaches, both within WCT and beyond. This support helps build resilience and provides stability and autonomy amongst Domestic Abuse survivors exiting temporary accommodation, preventing them returning to the cycle of abuse. This can also include support in accessing specialist Domestic Abuse support services for empowerment to move towards emotional recovery. They support communities in the south of the county to play a key role in prevention and resilience, to bring about cultural change. 'Professional Champions' are first port of call within their businesses and professional settings for colleagues and customers to seek support from. They are also embedding domestic abuse policies in business settings. 'Community Champions' are based in the community and offer a similar service to those who require support within the community of south Worcestershire, as well as spreading awareness of the issues.

A Focus on Reablement



The County Council launched a new service in October 2020 to ensure people receive the right support, at the right time to help them live independently at home for as long as possible.

The new, therapy-led service helps to prevent the need for any unnecessary admissions either to hospital or residential/nursing care and, where an admission is required, support people to return home as soon as they are well enough, with a plan for recovery and reablement.

The County Council has recognised the benefits reported from other authorities by offering a reablement-focused approach to social care and is investing in the new service, which will ensure decisions are made with people rather than for people and that our resources are targeted in an efficient manner. Since launching the service, we have supported more than 300 people, many of whom have left the service without the need for ongoing support, or with a reduced need.

Therapists and Promoting Independence Assistants will work with individuals, drawing on their strengths to identify and set goals to:

- **Focus on what an individual can do and build on these strengths** rather than focusing on what the individual cannot do.
- **Provide short-term intensive support** to enable individuals to learn how to live their lives as independently as they can; supporting them to regain their independence during the period of support.
- **Work across the health, social care, voluntary and community sectors** leading required interventions to reduce hospital and care admissions.

Any adult in the County will be considered for reablement when they, or their family/carer contact Adults Social Care for support.

As part of the learning from the pandemic, in partnership with our health colleagues, additional funding has been agreed to increase the reablement service to enable more people to be discharged from hospital with support at home. A recruitment campaign started in June 2021 with the aim of appointing an additional 100 front line workers as part of the reablement service, this almost doubles the capacity available. This will improve the speed in which people can leave hospital as a package of support is available for them to settle back in at home. This additional resource is really important in meeting our home first approach supporting people to live independently at home for longer.

Community Action - Here2Help



There is a dedicated Here2Help website where you can offer support, ask for non urgent help or read some useful hints and tips to get you through self isolation:

www.worcestershire.gov.uk/here2help

If you can't access the internet, we have a helpline to call where someone will be there to help you to complete the forms.

Call us on 01905 768053

Here2Help was launched in March 2020 as One Worcestershire's community action response to COVID-19. The purpose of Here2Help is to provide support to the residents of Worcestershire who are having to self-isolate and/or have additional needs due to the COVID-19 outbreak and do not have friends, family or neighbours to support them. As of the 30 April 2021 there have been over 5200 requests for help made and over 2400 offers of help. Some key recent highlights include:

- Here2Help has been supporting Herefordshire and Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) deliver COVID vaccination clinics in Worcestershire where volunteers fulfilled a number of non-clinical roles helping to underpin the successful roll out of the vaccination programme throughout Worcestershire. Between December 2020 to April 2021, over 12000 hours of volunteer support has been organised.
- From November 2020, during periods of national lockdown, 835 requests were received from clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) individuals via the National Shielding Support Service (NSSS) - a national system that people could use to ask for support if they had a condition which meant they were classed as CEV. Contact and support was offered to all individuals who registered during the period they were shielding.
- From 1st April 2021, Here2Help have been providing support to those who are self-isolating as part of the national 'Self Isolation Practical Support' scheme. During April 2021, 34 requests were received under this scheme either via Test and Trace or directly to Here2Help.
- Here2Help telephone lines have been open for additional hours at weekends during times of local surge testing. The team have supported local residents with testing arrangements, test kit enquiries and practical support for those who are self-isolating.
- The Here2Help service continues to meet the needs of our residents and after overwhelming positive feedback on the difference this makes to people, we are now evolving the service and a public search facility that public, social prescribers, professional staff and other partners can use to search for organisations that can offer help and support to people in the community. During the COVID pandemic we built up a great set of community data in Here2Help from organisations who signed up with us and this was used by Here2Help staff to search and match resources to people who requested help. We now intend to turn the data public facing so that people can search and signpost themselves or someone they were assisting to an organisation.

Feedback from Individuals who have requested support via Here2Help:

"I am hopeful this is the correct email address to write to say a huge thank you for your help and support given to my aunt during this pandemic. Your help and support to her with phone calls of help and regular food deliveries have been very much appreciated by us all and for that we thank you"

"What a fabulous community service you have provided"

"Your help, advice and kindness towards me this afternoon was a huge help and also a big relief to me. I didn't realise I don't have to suffer in silence"

“I so appreciate being able to talk to you today. Thank you for doing so much to support the community in these difficult times.”

“I wanted to email you and thank you for everything you have done today... You have done more in an afternoon than anyone has in years thank you.”

Feedback from staff running COVID Vaccination Clinics:

“I cannot thank you and the volunteers enough for your continued support! The vaccination programme is going really well, and all volunteers have been amazing!”

“The volunteers have been absolutely invaluable over the last few weeks, and I don’t know what we would have done without them”

“Thank you for your support and the fantastic volunteers. We are humbled and extremely grateful.”

Promoting Independence Using Technology to support Independent Living

Many of the teams of people work closely together to support the lives of Worcestershire's residents and we'd like to share two such success stories with you. Both residents have given permission for their stories to be shared, but we have changed their names for additional privacy.

These stories show how the commissioned services – in this case for assistive technology – can be used in the various home settings such as supported living environments to maintain independent living and to improve the individual's quality of life as a result of collaborative working between our commissioning and social work teams and a Worcestershire based TEC service provider – even during the challenges of Covid-19, resulting in great feedback from our service users and their families!

Michael is 38 years old and is bed bound due to a broken back when he was 16. He is very up to date with TEC and currently uses a head nano device, although some such devices have been known to fail after a period of time. When our Lead Commissioner, Laura Westwood, undertook a review, she asked the provider to investigate to source a replacement or to provide an alternative solution. The provider telephoned Michael to gain a better understanding of his issues and learned that Michael's device was no longer in production but similar devices such as the "Eye Gaze" could provide a longer-term solution. A full assessment was undertaken, and Michael tested several devices, but they did not quite fit the bill. The provider returned and was able to secure two, free of charge, back-ups to Michael's old device, also signing him up as a volunteer tester for new equipment to help them learn about further equipment that potentially will support Michael once his current equipment can no longer be maintained, giving him a real purpose in helping to develop products that benefit himself and others for years to come.

Cathy is in her twenties and has Cerebral Palsy. She lives in a supported living environment with her own flat and wanted to explore technology that would provide her more independence avoiding the need to always wait for support to arrive. Laura discussed options for home automation with the provider, that would allow Hannah the freedom of turning lights and plug sockets on and off, seeing who is at the front door and opening and closing the blinds. When the provider presented the proposals to Cathy she was quite overcome and cried many happy tears – this would revolutionise her ability to remain, - improve even – her level of independent living. The cost of the options was calculated and another lead commissioner, Steve Medley, presented some challenges to ensure there were no other more cost-effective suppliers of the equipment. He challenged us with the costings and asked us to explore alternative suppliers to make the solution more value for money. A different supplier was located, and the equipment installed and linked to both Cathy's Alexa and mobile phone. Although Cathy has subsequently had to move to a different supported living environment, our commissioners, service providers in conjunction with Cathy and her father, the core tech moved with her and Cathy will be utilising the plug sockets to support with lamps to light the property when needed and a pendant to alert staff on site will also be provided for when Cathy needs help, allowing her independence in her own room. Cathy's family are so pleased to see their daughter able to live with relative independence and again, thanks are due to the council teams and their chosen providers.

Adult Social Care Reforms

The Government White Paper, People at the Heart of Care: Adult Social Care Reform, was released on 1st December 2021. It emphasises the need for high-quality personalised care that is available to people across the country. It's 3 main objectives are to provide people with

- More choice, control, and support to live independent lives
- Access outstanding quality and tailored care and support
- Fair and Accessible adult social care support

In Worcestershire, this aligns to our People Strategy, Housing Strategy, Carers Strategy and digital strategy in which we aim to enhance our offer in providing accessible high quality, early advice and information, a variety of support options to assist people to remain independent, increase the number of people requiring care and support to be able to use Direct Payments and Assistive Technology and working closely with our Housing Partners to provide affordable housing that enables people to live independently.

The announcement for funding includes investment in:

- A workforce to enable a thriving and sustainable social care workforce
- Housing and home adaptations, integrating housing into new local health and care strategies
- Better access and use of technology and digital support
- Support for unpaid carers

We will work closely with our Partners and gather the views of our residents and those who use our services to understand the changes further over the coming months.

