

TITLE OF REPORT: Covid19 Update

REPORT OF: Caroline O'Neill, Strategic Director Care, Wellbeing
And Learning

SUMMARY

This report sets out an updated overview of the Gateshead Health and Care System response to the Covid19 pandemic.

Background

1. Care, Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee have asked for an update from Health and Social Care partners regarding their response to the Covid19 pandemic.
2. Throughout the pandemic partner organisations have worked in an integrated and seamless way to ensure a comprehensive and robust response was provided in Gateshead.
3. This report sets out the high level detail and presentations will be given by officers, to provide further information and to facilitate a discussion with Committee Members.

Overview of Covid19 response by Commissioning, Health, Public Health and Social Care

4. Health and Social Care Partners in Gateshead have worked together seamlessly during the Covid19 pandemic, to ensure that health and care services respond strategically to the issues faced, and that the most vulnerable residents in Gateshead are supported in a coordinated way.
5. The Care, Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee have received previous reports during the pandemic, and this update builds upon the information shared in those committee meetings.
6. Partners in Gateshead continue to meet regularly on a range of focused topics including but not limited to:
 - Vaccination
 - Hospital Discharge
 - Care Market Support
 - Testing (including role out of Lateral Flow Testing)

- Workforce flexibility
- Infection Prevention and Control
- System oversight
- Data
- Epidemiology
- Community Engagement

Meeting times and schedules are flexed up and down as response requirements vary.

7. The focus of the meetings/cells is to ensure a coordinated approach across the health and care system; ensure all agencies were working to the agreed national guidance; enable mutual aid across organisations; identify and escalate organisational or system risks; and provide assurance to Council and Partner Corporate Management Teams.

Best practice

8. Examples of best practice demonstrated during the crisis included:
 - Vaccination roll out
 - Designated Settings for Covid19 positive hospital discharges
 - Regular testing of the health & care workforce and vulnerable people
 - Hospital Discharge to Assess model
 - Regular support to Care Providers
 - Outbreak control management

Regional and National links

9. Gateshead has continued to maintain and contribute to national and regional networks across, commissioning, health, social care and public health, ensuring that best practice was understood and shared across a much wider network. Guidance continues to be issued from Central Government on a regular basis, (e.g. in respect of vaccination roll out and cohorts and workforce flexibility funding) and Gateshead officers engage and proactively respond to this.

Current pressures

10. Lack of certainty remains a concern, both in terms of National funding and policy. Whilst short term national funding has been made available for areas such as infection control and workforce pressures, there are frequently strict rules regarding how the money needs to be spent and by when, which in effect creates short term responses to long term issues.
11. From a policy perspective, no decision has yet been made by DHSC regarding the hospital discharge process post 31st March, although there is some indication

that the National Funding may cease. Lobbying by the likes of the LGA and ADASS is highlighting the significant risks this would entail, especially in respect of delayed transfers of care and the subsequent impact on hospital bed occupancy levels.

12. The Government has issued a White Paper on the reorganisation of the NHS, and many within the sector have questioned the timing of this, whilst still in a National Pandemic (alongside the earlier decision to reorganise Public Health England). The NHS White Paper includes some references to Social Care and a statement that National Reform on Social Care will be brought forward in 2021 (replacing the long awaited and promised Green Paper from 2017).

Summary

13. Health and Social Care Partners continue to work together very well in Gateshead in delivering the Covid19 Pandemic response, alongside 'business as usual' care and support. There are a number of pressures, especially in respect of funding, future National Policy and pressures caused by the Pandemic (especially in respect of inequalities), but partners remain committed to working together to overcome these and to lobby for a fairer future for Gateshead.

Recommendations

14. The committee is asked to note the contents of this report and consider the actions of partners during the pandemic.

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