

Briefing Note

Title: Wolverhampton Cares

Date: 19 January 2022

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Job Title: Deputy Director – Adult Services

Intended Audience:

Internal

Partner organisation

Public

Confidential

1.0 Purpose

1.1 To update Health and Wellbeing Together on the launch of the Wolverhampton Cares initiative to promote and support the Health and Social Care support available and to be developed for everyone working in Adult Social Care in Wolverhampton. Wolverhampton Cares includes support to private providers in Wolverhampton as well as our internal and Health colleagues. Wolverhampton Cares is our commitment to support the City's care sector, our commitment to care workers and family carers, and our commitment to equality of access to high quality care

2.0 Background

2.1 The Covid-19 Pandemic has brought significant attention to Social Care nationally, highlighting the pressures faced by the Social Care market including staff retention, sustainable wages for people working the sector, quality, and appropriate provision. The issues facing social care are long term issues; the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated issues already present in the Social Care sector.

2.2 Against a backdrop of increasing pressure in the preparation for Winter, Wolverhampton Cares was launched to provide support to the Care Sector in Wolverhampton. Our providers have stepped up and during Covid have managed a change in NHS policy resulting in increasing home care hours provided by over 4,000 per week – this demand has been met almost completely by the commissioned care market. In addition to this, morale in social care nationally is low, staff retention is low, and the mandatory vaccination risks further destabilisation of the Social Care market.

2.3 Wolverhampton Cares brings together the City of Wolverhampton Council, the Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust, and the University of Wolverhampton to provide additional help and support to care providers – and we are hoping that more organisations will join us in the weeks and months ahead.

3.0 Work undertaken so far

3.1 Support to providers under the Wolverhampton Cares umbrella includes an increase in the hourly rates paid by the Council to home care providers and reablement providers as well as the creation of more 'step down' residential beds to support

people who need reablement at home, but have no care available, and a commitment to work even more closely with care providers to understand how the Council and other organisations can support them through a very difficult winter and into spring 2022.

- 3.2 A recruitment drive is underway for new care staff to work across the sector, with the Council increasing the capacity of the Home Assisted Reablement Provision (HARP) team, which provides support to adults in their own homes. On what was also Carers' Rights Day, the Council has announced it was also expanding the City's Carer Support Team so it is able to offer even more support to local family carers. This will help us to support families who want to care for their loved ones at home, reducing some demand on our health partners.
- 3.3 The Council has also commissioned the Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust to deliver a new occupational health service available to support the health and wellbeing of around 2,700 staff across 70 care homes in the City.
- 3.4 To ensure all our providers have access to independent advice and support, we have supported membership costs of West Midlands Care Association to allow all providers the same level of support.

4.0 Next Steps

- 4.1 A Wolverhampton Cares Steering Group is in place within City of Wolverhampton Council and wider integration work is taking place within the Patient Journey workstream of the One Wolverhampton Place Based Partnership
- 4.2 The Steering Group will meet in January to forward plan activity and outcomes expected from Wolverhampton Cares in 2022 for approval by Strategic Executive Board and will be consulted on at a One Wolverhampton level. The current outcomes include:

Appropriate Social Work Offer -

- Commitment to meeting the needs of people in Wolverhampton, additional resources in place through Relight to support the additional needs arising from Covid-19 including Mental Health and Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) referrals.

Workforce, Skills and Retention -

- First meeting of CWC, CCG, RWT, Princes Trust, WMCA, Voluntary Sector, University and College to take place in January 2022
- Commitment to connecting those furthest from the job market in Wolverhampton into a health and care career path (through links with housing colleagues).

Carer Passport -

- Working with education providers to support Carers in education or training without extensive bureaucracy to enable carers to access support through their education / training provider with their own education.

Carer Respite Support -

- Working with Public Health to offer activities for carers at the same time as supporting those who they care for to undertake leisure activities.

- 4.3 Wolverhampton Cares will be an ongoing scheme that encompass support for the Social Care sector in the City. Regular updates can be provided.