

HWES Annual Event - July 2021:

Social Care Recovery

Context

This document provides a summary of the discussion which took place during the workshop on Social Care Recovery held as part of the Healthwatch East Sussex Annual Event 2021 held on the 21st July 2021. The workshop was facilitated by Elizabeth Mackie and Dame Philippa Russell.

Key points from the discussion:

Workshop participants were asked for their views and experiences, and these were used to generate answers to the three questions below. Under each question is a summary of the main discussion points.

Opening Discussion

Dame Philippa opened the discussions with a recap on the main presentation/s reiterating the key points/questions for Social Care (including care homes).

- On Care Homes, is it a home or healthcare? Rights of residents, relatives/families - freedom to have visitors whenever...
- Care Home staff and the mandatory vaccinating of care home staff cannot be ignored
- Overarching emotional, mental health burden for the future across the sector
- Broader issues include 'The want from Social Care' - High Quality Care and Support in the Community
- The ask to Healthwatch; to push for a long-term plan for Social Care and that Care Homes are seen as a mainstream service
- Good care is 'shared care', praise for acknowledging the role of 'Essential carer' and the recognition that relatives are important partners in care

Where we are now?

- Care Homes took a terrible hit during Covid
- What Social Care can and should provide has changed significantly - different to what it has been 'forced' into providing [COVID response]
- Currently operating as a 'crisis service'
- Impact on workforce as well as service users
- Mandatory vaccination of care staff - what about all NHS staff? What about residents? Where residents have the capacity to consent and are clear they do not want to receive the vaccine, how does impact on other residents and staff?

- Care Home visiting - could and should we be more relaxed? Can we share the good stories about what went well during the pandemic?

Recovery (big theme)

- Sense by some, not in recovery yet - still responding to the pandemic (Care Homes). Major concerns about a challenging winter with possible resurgence of covid combined with influenza and other respiratory infections. Many community services (eg day services, respite care) still either reduced or closed.
- Workforce / people burnt out over the past 12/18 months working incredibly long hours
- Where there has been lots of support for Care Homes, concerns when 'others' providing that support start to go back to 'normal' as 'normal' starts up again.
- Concerns that there will be a return to the way it was before, how are organisations such as CQC going to respond? are they going to go after Care Homes with a 'big stick' . Will care homes lose that supportive element? How do the regulators assess the all-important 'quality of life' in Care Homes in addition to compliance with statutory duties?
- Acknowledgement that the care 'marketplace' is in a fragile state, but there has been lots of positive partnership and collaboratively working during the pandemic and ESCC have been praised by outside organisations, need a more positive line for social care going forward

Improvements

- Improve image - care staff low paid for level and volume of skills they have, delivering personal care in the community can be looked down upon as a 'bad' job - social care is a complex sector
- Lots of factors impact on opening up safely, how much opens up?
- What about older and disabled people living in the community - what's good support for them look like?
- Not forgetting winter - expected increase in respiratory viruses as less social distancing and wearing of face coverings
- Nationally, the Dept Health and Social Care developing a winter plan - this needs to happen at local level.
- Care Homes shine a light on the whole Social Care system (Dilnot report)
- How we pay for social care lots of discussion in the past of social care reforms - very little forthcoming ADASS Spring Survey refers to underfunding amongst other points mentioned in part one presentation. Concerns that there has been more discussion about how to pay for social care than agreement about what social care we want and need.
- Improve awareness of Social Care. There was support within the group for the phrase used several times at the event:
- Important to remember that Social Care (like the NHS) is an 'all age service'. We need to get younger and working age people engaged in the debate about its future.
- 'What do we mean by Social Care?' the group agreed most people do not have much awareness, it means different things to different people and that there is

more to social care than care homes. examples given the number of outstanding social care assessments. What are the current statistics in East Sussex? How many people are receiving a social care assessment within 28 days?

The assessment process can be seen not only as the gateway to 'Social Care' but also as a means of enabling people needing care and support (and their family carers) to have the information and recognition that they need in order to plan for the future.

What can Healthwatch do to help?

- Philippa has mentioned a national winter plan - HWES needs to be involved in local plans
- HWES volunteers have suggested a Social Care Task Group be formed to take forward issues discussed at the event and from other insight it receives from local people on social care
- Task group should include inviting health and care colleagues as well as providers
- HWES continue to monitor the White Paper as it continues its passage and raise the profile of social care
- Look at peoples experiences of social care in their homes, Extra Care Settings and more broadly in the community (non-accommodation-based services) - re focus on prevention and where social care overlap with NHS i.e. hospital discharge and Continuing Healthcare
- Continue to work collaboratively and build upon the partnerships established during the Care Homes webinars

Next steps

The anonymised feedback from this workshop will be shared with workshop participants, and with health and care commissioners and providers, and other partners.

Healthwatch East Sussex will use the information to guide its own work, including prioritising its annual workplan.

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