

# **Covid-19 - Preparedness and Restoration / Recovery Planning in West Sussex**

## **Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group Final Report and Conclusions/Recommendations**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 In July 2020, during the Covid-19 global pandemic, the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee's Business Planning Group recommended that the Committee should establish a Task and Finish Group to focus on the West Sussex health and social care sector recovery planning and preparedness for a potential second wave of the virus.
- 1.2 **Membership** was politically balanced and included a representative from the district/borough co-opted members of HASC and the Committee's Healthwatch representative, to provide intelligence gathered from patients and outcomes from any relevant commissioned work.
- 1.3 The **scope** of the TFG included:
  - Lessons learned to date (bearing in mind the crisis is ongoing) to inform preparedness for a second wave
  - NHS local restore and recovery plans (winter planning)
  - Local Outbreak Plan and plans for ongoing monitoring/assurance through the Local Outbreak Engagement Board (Health and Wellbeing Board)
  - Work with West Sussex residents especially in relation to those shielding (access to health and social care) and work with the voluntary sector
- 1.4 The intention was that the work of the TFG would have the following **outcomes**:
  - Reflective learning relating to readiness to cope with next stage and local intelligence from residents (patients/service users/carers)
  - Support the work of Healthwatch and ensure lessons learned are taken forward
  - Act as critical friend to Chairman of the HWB in monitoring the Local Outbreak Plan moving forward
  - Assurance in relation to NHS planning in recovery and for the upcoming winter period, as part of the committee's health scrutiny role
- 1.5 The **methodology** used by the TFG was a series of evidence-gathering sessions providing verbal updates from relevant NHS and County Council officers, supported by written material that was readily available. This approach reflected learning from Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) webinar attended by the Chairman and HASC support officer in June 2020. Three evidence gathering sessions were held during August and September 2020, (the evidence gathering pack can be found at Appendix A), as follows:
  - **West Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group:** Managing Director, Pennie Ford and Clinical Director, Dr Laura Hill, discussed recovery plans and winter planning plans; planning for second wave, to include lessons learnt from the first wave.

- **West Sussex Director of Public Health and Health and Wellbeing Board Chairman:** Anna Raleigh, Director of Public Health (subsequently Dr Stephen Horsley as Interim Director of Public Health) and Cllr Amanda Jupp, the Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Board, discussed the Local Outbreak Plan, track and trace and lessons learned.
- **West Sussex County Council Director of Communities,** Emily King discussed the work of the Community Hubs throughout the pandemic in relation to health and social care and work with the voluntary sector.

1.6 TFG members also provided reflections on behalf of their local communities.

## 2. Outcomes

2.1 The TFG met for a final meeting on 30 September 2020 to review the evidence gathered and to ask any final questions of those who had presented evidence.

2.2 The TFG agreed the following **conclusions/recommendations to be put to the Health and Wellbeing Board and the West Sussex County Council Cabinet:**

- a) Recommends that the model of '[Trusted Voices](#)' (community leader, a leader in a workplace or voluntary setting, or a representative of a given community) be replicated in West Sussex to assist with public health messaging regarding the pandemic. The TFG emphasises the importance of avoiding 'generic messaging' approaching a second wave of the virus.
- b) Recognises that the Local Outbreak Plan is a live document, responding to the pandemic as it develops. The TFG welcomed sight of a lessons learned document relating to a local outbreak of the virus in Crawley and recommends that these be taken forward by the Local Outbreak Engagement Board. It particularly wants the Board to support District and Borough Licensing Teams, to ensure that licensed premises have understood and are following the guidance in relation to 'Track and Trace'.
- c) Asks the West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board, in its role of supporting the overall health and wellbeing of West Sussex residents, to discuss the issue of appointment non-attendance at hospitals and develop further communications to reassure patients, especially approaching the winter period.
- d) Concludes that the community response has been outstanding throughout the pandemic and commends the partnership working between the County Council and District and Borough Councils, in supporting those residents who had or still were shielding. It recommends that the 'keeping in touch' element of the Community Hubs should not be lost and that connections be continued with residents the County Council has not had knowledge of previously, as this is integral to its health and social care long term prevention agenda.

- e) Requests that officers work collaboratively with all local members to support their communities throughout the pandemic and beyond.
- 2.3 The TFG agreed the following **conclusions/recommendations to be put to West Sussex CCG and the Sussex Health and Care Partnership**:
- a) Raises concerns at the rate of appointment non-attendance at hospitals throughout the county and the potential knock on impact this will have on the wider system, in terms of waiting lists. It urges NHS colleagues to focus communications on those attending routine appointments, to better understand behaviours and to try and prevent the rate of non-attendance increasing further. The TFG suggests the development of 'virtual walk rounds' so that patients know what to expect when attending their appointments.
  - b) The TFG emphasises the importance of community mental health services, especially approaching a second wave and that this should be prioritised by all health and social care partners. It agreed that this should be part of the focus for scrutiny the HASC inquiry day planned for February 2021 and that NHS colleagues be asked to present further information to the Committee at that session.
  - c) Confirms support to the proposed winter plans as presented by the CCG.
- 2.4 **Focus of future scrutiny:** The TFG received a report from Healthwatch regarding access to dentistry (appended in the evidence gathering pack) which raised a number of concerns which the TFG recommended should be pursued as part of the Committee's scrutiny of primary care planned for November 2020 and that a representative from NHS England be asked to attend. Members also recommended that that the learning from GP digital consultations should also be part of the scope of the committee's inquiry day in relation to primary care in November 2020.

**Cllr Bryan Turner**

Task and Finish Group Chairman and  
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