

**WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL COVID-19 PANDEMIC BRIEFING  
FEBRUARY 2021**

**Priority issues**

- a) National and Local Outbreak Management (paras 1 - 21)**
- b) Clinically Extremely Vulnerable and Community Hub update (paras 22 – 44)**
- c) Children, Young People and Learning - update (paras 45 - 64)**
- d) Care Homes update (paras 65 – 84)**

## A) National and Local Outbreak Management

### West Sussex Data

1. **Scale** – between January 31st to February 6th, – across the county overall there were 1,384 cases, on average 198 positive cases a day. In the previous 7-day period there were 2,167 cases, and average of approximately 310 cases per day.
2. The **seven-day incidence rate** varies among the districts and boroughs:
  - Over the period January 31st to February 6th, Crawley had the highest rate at 255.3 per 100,000 population, Mid Sussex the lowest rate at 90.7 per 100,000.

	<b>Cases</b> between January 31st to February 6th	<b>Rate per 100,000</b>	<b>Rate per 100,000 (60+ years)</b>
Adur	75	116.6	84.5
Arun	330	205.3	128.0
Chichester	205	169.2	227.9
Crawley	287	255.3	218.6
Horsham	191	132.8	126.5
Mid Sussex	137	90.7	90.6
Worthing	159	143.8	120.8
<b>West Sussex</b>	<b>1,384</b>	<b>160.2</b>	<b>141.8</b>
South East	13,826	155.2	128.8
England	109,543	194.6	151.0

- Overall, the county rate was 160.2 per 100,000, back to the rate observed in mid-December. The rate for the South East region was 155.2 per 100,000 and for England the rate was per 194.6 per 100,000.
- The rate of cases for people aged 60+ ranged from 227.9 per 100,000 in Chichester down to 84.5 per 100,000 in Adur; the overall West Sussex rate is 141.8 per 100,000 population. The regional rate is 128.8 per 100,000 and the England rate 151.0 per 100,000.

3. **Positivity Rates** – For the period January 31st to February 6th, Crawley had the highest positivity rate in West Sussex; at 9.7% this has fallen considerably in recent weeks from a high of approx 25%.

Area	Positivity Rate (weekly percentage of individuals tested who test positive)
Adur	4.9
Arun	6.2
Chichester	6.4
Crawley	9.7
Horsham	5.3
Mid Sussex	3.4
Worthing	4.5
<b>South East</b>	5.7
<b>England</b>	7.4

4. **Hospital Activity** - The national Coronavirus dashboard (link below) includes information at individual NHS Trust level. <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/>

Note: The national dashboard is still showing figures as at 2<sup>nd</sup> February. Locally we have access to more recent data, these are shown below but should be treated as provisional.

5. Pressure on hospitals remains high but it is falling. Overall numbers of COVID-19 patients are reducing but remain over 10% of all inpatients. The (expanded) ITU/HDU usage is high, and is more sluggish in declining.

As reported on **11<sup>th</sup> February**:

*COVID-19 patients currently in hospital*

Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust	111
Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust	117
Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	133

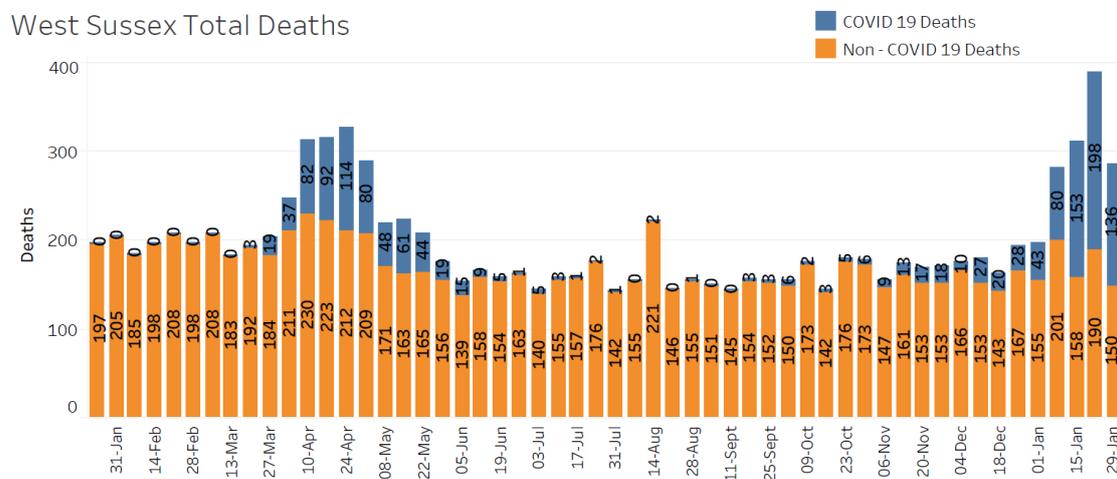
*COVID-19 patients – ITU / HDU*

Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust	32
Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust	5
Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	21

*% of Beds Occupied by a COVID-19 Patient*

Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust	13%
Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust	19%
Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	14%

6. **Deaths** have risen considerably in recent weeks, however in the most recent week (week ending 29th January, of deaths registered to 6th February) there was a fall:
  - a. The number of COVID-19 deaths for West Sussex residents was 136 (compared to 198 the previous week).
  - b. The number of COVID-19 deaths for West Sussex residents who died in a care home setting were 54 (compared to 78 the previous week).
  - c. The overall number of deaths (from all causes) in a care home setting were 98 (compared to 137 the previous week)
7. So far there have been 1,424 deaths for West Sussex residents involving COVID-19, based on any mention of COVID-19 on the death certificate. 754 (53%) of these deaths occurred in a hospital setting and 568 (40%) occurred in a care home setting.



8. **COVID-19 Vaccination Programme** The NHS (Sussex Health and Care Partnership) is leading the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme across Sussex, working with Local Resilience Forum partners. The County Council are supporting the Vaccination Programme as needed.
9. The Programme is being rolled out at great pace; to date more than 350,000 people across Sussex have received this vital protection and many more thousands are due over the coming weeks.
10. People in the eligible groups are being offered the vaccine in a range of ways – at larger vaccination centres, at local GP led vaccination services, a roving service that has been visiting care homes and people who are housebound, and a small number of pharmacies.
11. There are now three vaccination centres open; the Brighton Centre, Crawley Hospital and in the Welcome Building in Eastbourne.
12. The Sussex Health and Care Partnership (SHCP) advise that they are on track to have offered the vaccination to the first \*four priority groups, [as advised](#)

[by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation \(JCVI\)](#), in line with the Government target.

13. The SHCP COVID-19 Vaccination Programme website is regularly updated and provides the latest information:

<https://www.sussexhealthandcare.uk/keepsussexsafe/sussex-covid-19-vaccination-programme/>

\*JCVI Priority Groups 1-4: 1. Residents in a care home for older adults and their carers, 2. All those 80 years of age and over and frontline health and social care workers 3. All those 75 years of age and over 4. All those 70 years of age and over and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals

#### **14. Vaccination Programme Data**

*Note:* Vaccination data are not provided at lower tier local authority level, we are anticipating that it will be published soon. Given the scale and speed of the vaccination programme figures do change frequently. The Sussex Health and Care Partnership (SHCP) publish regular newsletters, the West Sussex newsletter of 11<sup>th</sup> February states that 92.7% of West Sussex 80+ year olds have had their first dose, with 91.2% of 75-79 years olds and 78.8% of 70-74 years olds. 79.5% of people classified as clinically extremely vulnerable, irrespective of age, had also been vaccinated.

11/02/21	Sussex		West Sussex	
Priority group	First dose	%	First dose	%
Age 80+	101,612	90.4%	55,610	92.7%
Age 75-79	69,584	89.8%	37,349	91.2%
Age 70-74	79,824	76.8%	42,623	78.8%
Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals	48,097	74.3%	27,177	79.5%

[Link to SHCP vaccination newsletters](#)

#### *Local Tracing Partnership (LTP)*

15. Last November, the West Sussex Local Tracing Partnership (LTP) launched across East Sussex and West Sussex to support the national NHS Test and Trace system. Since November the LTP has contacted 69% of those cases that the national NHS Test and Trace system has not been able to contact (data as at 7 February 2021).

16. Following a large increase in case numbers since 1 January, case volumes have continued to reduce steadily (data as at 7 February 2021). This could be due to the impact of national lockdown restrictions, however, there are likely many confounding factors contributing to this reduction, and it is too early to tell if this trend will continue.

17. In addition to text and emails, the LTP are also contacting new cases by post. This is a further engagement tool for those who don't want to answer calls or where the LTP have an incorrect or missing phone number but have an address that they believe to be correct.

### *Community Testing*

#### *Asymptomatic Testing Programme in West Sussex*

18. West Sussex currently has sufficient testing capacity under existing arrangements to meet demand.
19. Government is keen to roll out additional asymptomatic testing across England for those who cannot work from home, to break the chain of transmission. Overlapping programmes have been launched to roll testing out.
20. One programme is focused on delivery of lateral flow testing by local authorities, where the Department of Health and Social Care are working with the sector to set up lateral flow testing infrastructure. Locally, the programme is being co-ordinated among partners across Sussex (upper tier authorities, the Police and Fire & Rescue Services) – to ensure consistency of approach, and we're currently in the process of establishing the operational priorities and logistics required to ensure the testing can be carried out effectively.
21. Separately, the Department for Health and Social Care launch a programme nationally where Government work with companies with over 50 staff members to set up testing capacity directly.

## **B) Clinically Extremely Vulnerable and the Community Hub**

### Clinically Extremely Vulnerable

22. As part of the national lockdown, the Government has advised all clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) people to take extra measures to protect themselves during this period.
23. Clinically extremely vulnerable people are advised to stay at home as much as possible. They may still go outdoors carefully to exercise or to attend health appointments but are strongly advised not to visit shops or supermarkets. Individuals are directed towards their Local Authority Community Hub to assist in the provision of food and essential supplies if they are unable to shop online and do not have a support network able to assist.
24. The County Council is still receiving updates to the Shielded Patient List which identifies those who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV). As at 2

February 2021 there are 35054 residents in this group across West Sussex. This is an overall increase of 100 from the previous data update dated 22 January.

25. Since this data has been available in the first wave of the pandemic 3239 individuals have been removed as their condition no longer classifies them in the most at risk and 2871 have died. Early indications suggest that a review of the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable cohort will be undertaken during February with a significant uplift in numbers seen nationally. As yet the impact for West Sussex is unknown.
26. Emails and letters have been sent to all individuals on the CEV list reminding them of the support available via the Community Hub. Individuals newly added to the CEV list are contacted by telephone along with those who register on the National Shielding Support Service (NSSS) platform asking for support.

### *Community Hub*

27. The Community Hub, launched in late March 2020, is available during this national Lockdown to provide a range of support and practical assistance for all residents of West Sussex as well as almost 35,000 Clinically Extremely Vulnerable individuals.
28. Telephone lines remain open from 8am to 8pm, 7 days a week supported by website content and a series of e-forms to provide digital access. Additional staff have been temporarily redeployed from across the Communities Directorate to enable an increased level of proactive outbound contact during this new National Lockdown whilst recruitment of additional staff to bolster capacity is completed.
29. Clinically Extremely Vulnerable individuals, or their friends and family are encouraged to contact the Community Hub or use the online registration service. This service can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-shielding-support>, Individuals registering on this platform and indicating they require support will be telephoned directly by the Community Hub.
- 30.
31. Outbound contact from the Community Hub to newly added Clinically Extremely Vulnerable residents is ensuring that they are able to receive the practical support they may require and providing reassurance to those who may only just have received their clinical diagnosis.
32. The County Council continues to utilise its own locally developed sustainable food and supplies offer available via the Community Hub, providing flexibility to support either a one off or ongoing requirement. Each food and supplies delivery is followed up by a call to minimise dependence by working on sustainable options where appropriate.

33. Between the formal reintroduction of Shielding as West Sussex moved into Tier 4 restrictions, ahead of the National Lockdown, and the most recent Government return on 4 February 2021, 356 households have been directly supported by the Community Hub with the provision of food. This equates to a total of 807 food packages.
34. There are a number of food options available via the Community Hub to accommodate different individual and household circumstances. The detailed breakdown is as follows; Emergency non-perishable food and supplies 53; Standard Doorstep Delivered Food Boxes (fresh and non-perishable items, supports 2 people for a week) 581; Apetito ( 1 hot lunch and 1 cold supper a day for 3 days) 150; and Doorstep Delivered Breakfast boxes (optional for Apetito customers, breakfast for 3 days) 23.
35. Government require a fortnightly data return on the activity undertaken by the Community Hub to support the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable.

#### *COVID Winter Grant Scheme*

36. On 8 November 2020, the Government announced extra targeted financial support for those in need over the winter period. West Sussex County Council was allocated £2m from this COVID Winter Grant Scheme.
37. Designed to provide direct assistance to families with children, other vulnerable households and individuals this grant covers the period from early December 2020 until the end of March 2021.
38. There is a requirement for the County Council to determine eligibility across the county and targets support within the scope of the grant conditions to provide direct assistance to individuals, vulnerable households and families with children particularly affected by the pandemic with meeting the cost of food, energy and water bills and other associated costs.
39. Working in partnership with our Schools and Further Education establishments children and families in receipt of Free School Meals during term time were provided with a £30 supermarket voucher to assist over the Christmas holiday. In recognition of how financially challenging recent months have been for many families across the county, the value of vouchers has been increased from £15 to £20 per eligible child for the February Half Term, and as per communications, schools can order from 8 – 12 February 2021
40. Working in partnership with the voluntary and community sector a number of locally based food and support models have been established. These build on existing networks but increase the accessibility and reach. Funds have been distributed to a number of organisations including Stonepillow, Horsham Matters and Age UK.
41. Age UK will deliver low-cost nutritious meals to peoples' homes with a chat, check and refer service alongside the provision of hot meals through day centres. In addition, they will give advice on wellbeing in winter from nutrition through to improving warmth and energy consumption in the home

and fit home improvements to increase warmth and reduce energy and water use. Anyone interested in receiving meals, energy advice or other support should call 01903 731 800 or email [info@aukwsbh.org.uk](mailto:info@aukwsbh.org.uk)

42. Citizens Advice will be distributing fuel and cash vouchers to eligible households for the period until the end of March. The scheme will be accessible to households with a pre-payment meter, credit meter and any other households struggling to pay for their fuel. The scheme will cater for households struggling to pay for gas, water, electricity and domestic heating oil and portable gas cylinders. Residents can access via 0808 278 7969 and advisers are available to answer the phone 9 am to 4:30 pm Monday to Friday.
43. Sussex Community Foundation are administering a funding programme on the County Council's behalf to support West Sussex VCSE organisations, Mutual Aid Groups, and Town and Parish Councils which are well placed to identify vulnerable households most in need of support. Organisations can apply via [https://sussexgiving.org.uk/named\\_funds\\_posts/covid-winter-support-fund/](https://sussexgiving.org.uk/named_funds_posts/covid-winter-support-fund/)
44. Funds have also been used to assist vulnerable individuals already known to the County Council.

### **C) Children, Young People and Learning (CYPL)**

45. The Executive Director, and her team, continue to ensure that there is a robust focus on service improvement, despite these challenges.

#### *Social Care Update*

46. Staffing levels remain good, however numbers of staff needing to isolate are rising, and there is some significant degradation to in-house residential provision. This is being well-managed and closely monitored at present and all in-house residential and fostering placements for our children remain stable. Staff in the department have been notified that it may be necessary to temporarily divert work to support other more critical priorities, including residential provision. At present there are no reports of staff with children of school age being unduly impacted by the partial closure of schools, with classroom places available where appropriate.
47. We know, from an analysis of the impact of the first national lockdown, how important it is that face to face visits to children open to social care continue. Guidance has been issued to staff and foster carers to ensure continuation of these visits, and to ensure contact with birth families is undertaken safely. All children open to social care continue to be RAG rated to ensure targeted responses to those children and families most in need are prioritised and safeguarded. This includes young people being worked with by the Youth Justice Service.

48. Early Help services are continuing, mainly remotely, but physical visits to families are continuing when required and workers are also delivering food parcels to vulnerable families under financial pressure.
49. There is a stable and sustainable stock of PPE which is being well managed to ensure delivery of frontline and other critical services.
50. Work is underway to ensure that all eligible staff (internal and from provider organisations) have good access to the vaccination programme. Future reports will provide data – but early indications are that take up is steadily increasing.

### *Early Years & Childcare*

51. Early years providers were, unlike schools who only remained open for children of Key Workers and Vulnerable children, were expected by the Government to remain open for all children under 5 years old. This caused significant pressure on the Early Years sector. The impact of this on business sustainability across the whole sector, for what are mostly small businesses, is significant. This may impact on the wider County Council statutory duties to ensure sufficient childcare places as outlined in Childcare Act 2006 especially in the early year sector (nurseries, preschools and some childminders) that deliver the Free Entitlement (FE) funding. On 14 January, the government published updated their guidance for the Early years Census 2021. This outlined that, where a child would normally attend Early Years provision, and that provision is made available to them by the provider, their expected hours should be recorded in the Early Years Census, where signed Parental Declarations are in place on or before 21 January 2021. This means children who, were it not for the impact of COVID-19 on either their own personal circumstances or on the operation of their Early Years setting, would be attending Early Years provision. This includes children who have previously attended the provision and children who were expected to start attending the provision in January. This means that setting can receive Free Entitlement for children they would be expected to see if they remain operating according to the current government guidance.
52. Of the 429 group-based providers registered with the County Council to provide this funding, in the week beginning 11/18 January:
- 96% are open
  - 2% are partially open
  - 0.7% are only open for critical workers and vulnerable children
  - 1% are currently closed
  - 0.3% are unknown
53. This change has meant that, where settings were currently struggling with high levels of staff absence due to sickness or their own access to childcare and a reduction in children attending and were concerned that they will be have no option but to close or reduce their offer to families, the majority of providers are currently offering places to all children whose families want them to attend. We are monitoring this situation weekly and continue to

support childcare providers and parents through the Family Information Service.

54. The updated government guidance about Spring term Free Entitlement funding means that our future funding allocation will be determined on the number of children registered to attend early years provision on 21 January. We are continuing to work to identify any settings not currently fully open to children to ensure access for families when they are ready for their child to attend.
55. The current position is that a significant number of children are not accessing their entitlement due to parental concerns around COVID-19, as well as the issues outlined above, and as concerns increase, numbers in attendance are likely to decrease. Whilst the change to the position on funding has had a positive impact for our providers, the issues around access to asymptomatic testing and vaccination are still factors causing high anxiety within the sector. There is significant national lobbying underway on this issue.

#### *Education and Skills Update*

56. All schools are now partially open and are working to meet the needs of face to face teaching for all vulnerable children and the children of critical workers.
57. Whilst the majority of children of critical workers have secured a school place with 73.4% of children of critical workers attending school compared with national average of 69.5% and a South East average of 69.8%. As the term progresses, some schools are indicating increased pressure as parents struggle to support their child at home. For some schools, children in this position are now being deemed vulnerable. The staffing pressures exacerbated by union advice and LGA guidance, which conflicts with the DfE guidance, continues to present a risk to the ability of schools to continue.
58. School attendance during the third week of term in primary schools 23.4% compared with a national average of 21.1% and a South East average of 20.8%. In secondary schools, attendance was on average 5.6% compared with a national average of 4.3% and a South East average of 4.1%. For pupils with an EHCP, attendance in full or partially opened schools is 31.7% which is below the attendance of children with EHCPs in the South East 34.2% and below the national average of 35.6%. For children with a social worker, attendance averaged at 38.2% which was slightly higher than the previous week lower than the national average of 41% but broadly in line with the average for the South East (38.8%). For pupils who are eligible for a FSM and deemed disadvantaged, 18.78% attended school during the second week of term which is much higher than the national average of 13% and a South East average of 15%.
59. Special schools are providing a blended approach with those with the greatest need receiving face to face full time, others with a blend of face to face and home learning, and others with home learning only. This is the only way that special schools can manage provision safely.

60. Whilst some secondary schools are applying the lateral flow testing arrangement, the DPH recommends against serial testing of students and the DfE have suggested a pause. Primary schools have also now received their lateral flow test units from the DfE.
61. IT access for disadvantaged pupils working from home has been supported with additional guidance and access for schools to order through a DfE ordering portal. The portal is under extreme pressure nationally as schools put forward their requests. However, secondary schools and some primary schools are reporting that they have received hardware.
62. West Sussex is recommending moving towards the national Edenred voucher system which has now gone live. This is a national voucher scheme managed by the government for the provision of food vouchers for children eligible for a Free School Meal. The vouchers are for £15 per week to cover the cost of five lunches and parents can use these at many local supermarket chains. Whilst the scheme ran in the summer 2020, it was paused when children returned to school and has only recently been relaunched.
63. Home to school transport is working well overall and the transport team are working with our special schools to provide flexibility, based on each school's plans and needs.
64. School Effectiveness Link Advisers are organising a timeline of focused calls with schools over the term to pick up on vulnerable children not in school, on home-based learning provision, and on provision and learning progress for disadvantaged pupils. They are also a key contact for school leaders to raise issues.

## **D) Care Homes - update**

Care homes

65. There are 232 care homes for older people in West Sussex. The care homes provide around 8,570 beds. A third of these are commissioned by the County Council with the remainder commissioned through other local authorities, health or funded directly by residents.
66. For the week commencing 8 February 2021, 62 care homes for older people had a confirmed case among staff and/or residents. In the same period, 20 learning disability and one mental health service had confirmed cases.
67. For the same week, local data on care homes reports admissions are currently restricted in:
- 83 care homes for older people,
  - 4 extra care setting,
  - 20 care homes for mental health/learning disability,
  - 1 domiciliary care provider, and
  - 8 supported living settings.

68. There has been a continuing increase in the number of positive cases within care services throughout January. Initial indications at the week commencing 8 February 2021 are suggesting a slight decline in the number of care services impacted with positive cases since the previous week although the number affected remains high. Outbreaks are also being seen within community services with increasing reports from domiciliary care providers of staff and/or customers testing positive and impact on securing sufficient staffing. The Council is supporting some providers by liaising with care worker agencies to secure additional resource, however staffing capacity, particularly nursing has become very stretched and this is presenting concern about the availability of staff. The Council, working with Public Health and the Clinical Commissioning Group, continues to provide daily support for care services with confirmed outbreaks or identified cases of Covid-19.

69. Vaccination teams from GP-led services and Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust have enabled Sussex to meet the government target to vaccinate older care home residents by the end of January 2021. A small remainder of homes in Sussex had visits deferred for safety reasons during local outbreaks and these along with other residents or staff that were unwell or unable to have the vaccine during the initial visit will be re-visited as soon as possible. Care staff across Sussex also continue to be able to access the vaccine daily at vaccination centres.

70. With an increase in the number of services closing to admissions as a result of having Covid-19 outbreaks, pressure is placed on the health and social care system when trying to discharge people from hospital and this in turn impacts the speed of discharge for those people who are medically ready for discharge.

#### *Adult Social Care Rapid Testing Fund*

71. On 23 December 2020 the government announced a £149m fund to support the roll out of lateral flow device (LFD) testing in care homes for staff, visiting professionals and close contact visiting. This is a new grant with separate conditions to the previous Infection Control Funds. Care homes currently have access to 3 tests per week for their staff, with daily testing for 7 days in the event of a positive case to protect staff and residents. The total allocation for West Sussex is £3,284,756.

72. This funding was paid in a single instalment to local authorities in January 2021 and it can be used to cover expenditure from 2 December 2020 to 31 March 2021.

- 80% must be passed to care homes on a 'per beds' basis. This includes residential drug and alcohol services.
- 20% must be used to support the care sector to implement increased LFD testing but can be allocated at the local authority's discretion.

73. The government has set out what the funding can be spent on, which includes staff training for LFD testing, recruiting staff to facilitate increased testing, establishing a separate testing area and equipment for tests or their disposal.

74. On 3 February 2021 the Council took an executive decision to approve the distribution of the grant in West Sussex. 80% of the grant is therefore being distributed equally between all eligible homes in West Sussex (9,060 beds) equating to £290.04 per bed to support the LFD testing. The remaining 20% is being allocated at the same rate per bed to each of the 1,270 supporting living and extra care beds in West Sussex, plus extra funding is being distributed to smaller care settings (20 beds or less) where the costs of introducing LFD testing are proportionately higher.

#### *Adult Social Care Workforce Capacity Fund*

75. On 17 January the government announced a new £120m fund to help local authorities to strengthen adult social care staff capacity and ensure that safe and continuous care can be achieved.

76. The indicative allocation for West Sussex from the government using the adult social care relative needs formula is £1,651,726.

77. Guidance on the funding was published on 29 January 2021 and includes a requirement for the Council to report to the Department of Health and Social Care on the planned use of the grant by 12 February 2021. The final decision on the use of the grant will be made by the Lead Member for Adults and Health.

#### *Commissioning*

78. Care commissioning activity has been undertaken to support additional demand for health and social care support in the county over the winter months. Contracts have been awarded and commenced for:

- Additional domiciliary care hours across a range of both urban and rural areas, which have been delivering since 6 December 2020 and are increasing in volume as demand requires and capacity allows.
- Additional Home First Care capacity across the county, focussed on densely populated areas, which started on 14 December 2020 and are also increasing hours of delivery as required.
- Block contracted beds within care and nursing homes focused on supporting people with dementia and nursing dementia needs.
- Live in care provision for people being discharged from hospital and returning home, which commenced in the week commencing 18 January 2021.
- Extra Care service providers have started to make beds available on a short stay basis from the week commencing 18 January 2021, for people being discharged from hospital with care available according to the person's needs.

- Overnight care is being purchased on an individual basis as required for people who may be able to return home but have some overnight care needs at least initially. This also commenced from the week of 18 January 2021.
- On 26 January 2021 the Council published a decision to commission additional capacity to support hospital discharge. As a result, two short term care services within a hotel setting commenced in the week commencing 1 February 2021 for people being discharged from community hospital beds or acute hospital services to be supported prior to assessing their longer-term needs.

79. These alternative solutions will support our health and social care services at this time of significant pressure and enable people's care needs to be met where we face restrictions in a large number of services.

80. The County Council is also working alongside the Clinical Commissioning Group, NHS Continuing Healthcare, Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust, primary care, the Care Quality Commission and local providers to establish a designated settings service which will support people within hospitals who are testing positive to Covid to be discharged when medically ready to leave hospital.

#### *Mental health system*

81. Additional funds of £1.4m have been allocated to Sussex by NHSE to support timely discharge of people from mental health beds. In West Sussex this has increased the capacity of the successful discharge to assess model delivered by the community and voluntary sector and enhanced housing support to enable people to remain/return to their homes safely.

#### *People with learning disabilities*

82. Over recent weeks more settings where people with learning disabilities live have been impacted by outbreaks of Covid-19 which, given the 'household' nature of these and smaller staff teams, can have a significant impact. The Council is actively working with providers to connect them to agencies who can supply temporary staff and considering ways to increase the available workforce.

#### *Hospital capacity*

83. At the present time there is significant pressure on the acute hospital and community bed capacity in West Sussex due to current numbers of people requiring treatment for Covid 19 alongside usual seasonal demands. The Council is working with the hospitals to support timely discharge pathways but this is also a considerable challenge due to the level of demand and the number of care homes with restricted admissions due to Covid-19.

84. Hospital discharge hubs and a combined placement and sourcing team (CPST) continue to operate, as well as working with the Clinical Commissioning Group to secure appropriate levels of domiciliary care, care/nursing home beds and voluntary services to support effective

discharge. The additional commissioned winter capacity, on top of the County Council's commissioned Hospital Discharge Care Services which commenced in April 2020, aim to support swift discharges and enable people to return home where possible following discharge from hospital. Due to levels of demand at present, and the number of care homes which are restricted to admissions due to COVID-19, the discharge hubs and the CPST are under considerable pressure.