

## **EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL 2<sup>nd</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020**

### **ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND PUBLIC PROTECTION**

#### **DECISIONS**

##### **Day Care Services – COVID Secure Re-opening**

1. Approval to re-open Middlesbrough Council Provider Day Services on September 21<sup>st</sup> 2020 has been agreed, following submission of a re-modelling report shared with the Directorate Management Team on July 30<sup>th</sup> 2020. The re-opening models have been established in line with COVID-19 guidance, consultation with individuals /carers, assessment of need /priority, the councils health and safety processes and building management checks. Whilst initially there will be reduced capacity across all three provider day services (Community Inclusion Service (CIS), The Orchard, North Ormesby Day Centre) the hope and intentions are that a gradual increase in attendance will materialise as social distancing measures change .

##### **Provider Day Services – COVID-19 (March to August) - Outreach support**

2. Throughout the last five months the staff from all three day care providers have adapted to provide some excellent outreach support for Adults with Learning Disabilities /Complex needs and Elderly people in the Middlesbrough community. All three services have maintained contact weekly with families to ensure that all was well and to offer support where needed.
3. North Ormesby have provided support for up to 40 elderly people with key support needs re; dementia) in their own homes. The support has been greatly appreciated and valued by service users/ carers and families throughout, and has helped prevent many crisis /breakdowns within home situations.
4. For those who attended the Orchard and CIS services several service users and families have received have benefitted from community outings and support, again all carers have been very forthcoming in acknowledging the council support.
5. Sandringham (Autism Service) re-opened at the end of April (28<sup>th</sup>) to help support some emergency crisis situations for some individuals /families. It has proved to work very well and been a lifeline for families all of whom have been greatly appreciative of the help provided. It has been a credit to the commitment and support of the management teams and staff to be able to maintain the levels of support throughout the pandemic.

#### **PERFORMANCE**

##### **Integrated Commissioning Model**

6. The specifications have gone out for the specialist services that form part of the integrated commissioning model around homelessness, domestic abuse and substance misuse. Closing date for tenders is 27<sup>th</sup> August and they will be evaluated in September, in preparation for new services to be in place for the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021.
7. The Homeless Service is coming back into MBC from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 and the team will work from home until a location has been agreed for service delivery.

## Homelessness

8. We are continuing to provide temporary accommodation to homeless applicants as lockdown eases to ensure safety, we currently have 76 single people in temp accommodation, this includes 5 people with no recourse to public funds. We have no families in temporary accommodation.'
9. We are working hard to move people out of temporary accommodation and have secured over 100 places since March 2020 in either supported accommodation, the private rented sector or with a Registered Social Landlord. However, as people move on more people become homeless so the figure in temporary accommodation remains high. If we compare this to the average number of units last year the number in temp is doubled.
10. Due to Covid19 we can no longer provide the sit up service for rough sleepers, this was funded through the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). After discussion with the MHCLG it was agreed the funding could be reconfigured and used for staffing costs to support rough sleepers. Our rough sleeper numbers are increasing due to evictions from temporary accommodation, relationship breakdown etc., at the rough sleeper count last week 6 rough sleepers were identified on that particular night although over the month of July 17 rough sleepers were identified.
11. A bid is being prepared for the MHCLG 'Next Steps' fund to secure move on accommodation for rough sleepers, this will be submitted by 20<sup>th</sup> August.

## INVOLVEMENT AND PROMOTION

### Covid19 Regulations and support for residents and businesses

12. Since the start of the pandemic the Public Protection Service has fulfilled a number of roles in supporting residents and businesses. This has included the following:
  - Assisting with the delivery of essential food boxes to vulnerable residents, contacting residents as part of NHS shielding, and assisting in letter / leaflet drops to raise awareness of support offers and staying safe.
  - Temperature check stations were also set up in the town where people were offered a non-contact temperature check and given advice on protecting against Covid19. Free hand gels and facemasks were given away.
  - Provided advice to organisations and members of the public on the raft of new health protection laws and guidelines – helping them to understand and follow Covid-19 safety measures.
  - Daily patrols have been carried out to monitor business compliance and to respond to requests for advice.
13. Overall, there has been a high level of compliance with Covid-19 requirements. As the health protection laws change and further restrictions are lifted, or imposed, the Public Protection Service will continue to help businesses to provide safe environments for staff and customers.

### Tenancy Protection

14. The Public Protection Service has been looking at new tenancy protection laws and advising local landlords and lettings agents on these. Under the Tenants Fees Act 2019 tenants can only be charged fees for rent, deposits, changing a tenancy agreement, early termination of an agreement, payments in respect of utilities and Council tax, late payment of rent and costs of replacing lost keys or security devices. All other fees are now prohibited.
15. Previously, tenants could be charged for viewing a property, setting up a tenancy agreement, administrative fees, check-out fees and third party costs such as reference agency fees. The new laws reduce the costs incurred when renting a property and this means that prospective tenants can see what the cost of renting a property will be upfront without any hidden charges.

## **Illicit tobacco**

16. In March, Trading Standards Officers took part in operation to tackle the sale of illicit tobacco in Middlesbrough where five out of six retail premises visited had quantities of illicit tobacco. More than 41,000 cigarettes and 7.74kg of hand rolling tobacco were seized during the operation as well as raw tobacco, a leaf dryer, packaging materials and 10,000 cigarettes found in a separate self-storage unit. Since March, more than 40 retailers and landlords have been issued with warnings about their premises being used for the sale of illicit tobacco and the consequences of this. Officers are currently investigating another recent seizure of illicit tobacco in conjunction with Police.

## **Face masks**

17. From the start of the Covid19 pandemic face coverings have been in high-demand and the Public Protection Service has been monitoring this supply. An amount of face coverings that were imported were found to be fake and with false safety certificates. Consumers must be told about the level of protection face coverings provide and face coverings must comply with product safety laws, which includes certain labelling such as safety precautions to follow, for example – not suitable for children under 36 months due to choking hazard. Due to concerns over some face coverings found on sale in Middlesbrough over 200,000 products were removed from sale and the vendors given advice on the legal requirements for selling these items.

## **Scams linked to Covid19**

18. Trading Standards have issued a warning about scams that use people's fears of Covid19 – particularly scams that target the elderly and vulnerable including a scam where residents who were shielding were given the offer of having their pensions collected for them, which would then not receive.
19. Other scams identified during lockdown include fake websites that encourage people to subscribe to daily Covid19 updates and fake adverts for protective masks, sanitisers or vaccines; fraudsters purporting to be from HMRC offering tax refunds; text messages advising on coronavirus aid claims and donation services; and emails with offers for Covid19 testing kits.
20. The advice given by Trading Standards was to be aware of the various scams – and for anyone who is isolating to never allow an unknown person to collect their pension and if anyone receives emails, text messages or letters in the post about coronavirus from someone they don't know to ignore these and never give money or personal details to anyone who is you don't know and trust. Since April Trading Standards have dealt with 106 complaints about scams compared to 130 for the whole of last year.

## **PUBLIC HEALTH**

### **STRATEGIC**

#### **Recovery Planning**

21. The Health and Wellbeing elements of COVID-19 recovery planning progressing well. A co-produced action plan in is under development working cross council and with our external partners to design multi-agency COVID-19 recovery responses on issues including Financial insecurity, Community connectivity/tackling isolation, Maximising environmental benefit and sustainability, Anxiety, depression, bereavement and loss and Violence, abuse and trauma.
22. As part of health and wellbeing recovery we have engaged with Teesside University to undertake a programme of research into how COVID-19 related harm has manifested in our communities. We will be undertaking a series of conversations with communities throughout the autumn on how they have been impacted and using this learning to ensure our recovery efforts reflect the experiences of local people.

23. A Health Inequalities Assessment tool has been developed and is being rolled out across all Council recovery plans to ensure we are taking every opportunity to mitigate the broadening inequalities that COVID-19 has threatened and to maximise opportunity to address inequalities in our recovery efforts across all aspects of the work of the Council.

### **Curriculum for Life**

24. The Curriculum 4 Life project for primary and secondary schools across Redcar and Cleveland and Middlesbrough was launched in May.
25. The development of this project was initiated by the changes to Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education announced by the Department for Education (DfE) in June 2019 which become mandatory for all state funded schools from September 2020.
26. We are committed to providing the best start in life for all children and supporting them as they enter adolescence and transition to adulthood. One of the ways we can achieve this is through the delivery of high quality, consistent RSE and Health Education that ensures that all children and young people develop the knowledge and skills they need to make positive decisions related to their health and wellbeing.

### **School Based Immunisations Programme**

27. South Tees Public Health are supporting NHS England, leading the local conversations for the roll out of the school based immunisation programmes come September. The main focus has been the roll out of the childhood flu which aims to covers 25,000 children across South Tees from reception to year 7. The focus is currently on media and communications to encourage families to get their child immunised, including through our catch up programme for those who have missed immunisations due to Covid.

## **PERFORMANCE**

### **Supporting Smokers During Lockdown**

28. The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown brought with it a number of challenges to how we could support smokers to quit smoking within our specialist service. All face to face consultations were stopped and replaced with remote telephone consultations. Despite the lockdown our specialist service remained open and continued to provide behavioral support & medication to clients remotely.

## **INVOLVEMENT AND PROMOTION**

### **South Tees Breastfeeding Celebration Week**

29. The celebration week was aimed at celebrating/acknowledging breast feeders and raising awareness of breastfeeding across South Tees. This in turn supports the strategy objective to normalise breastfeeding.
30. Local mothers shared their pictures and stories of their feeding journey which enables an element of relatability/achievability to other mothers. Each partner was supplied with the social media (Facebook/Twitter) pack containing materials they could utilise throughout the week to promote the week and raise awareness on breastfeeding.

### **Raising awareness of cancer symptoms during the covid-19 pandemic**

31. As the nation went into lockdown on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, bowel and breast cancer screening invitations were suspended and only higher risk women were screened for cervical cancer. In April, 2 week wait referrals went as low as 25% for all tumour sites, so a national campaign 'help us to help you' was launched encouraging people to see their GP if they had potential cancer symptoms. Northern Cancer Alliance built upon the national campaign focussing on early presentation and encouraging cancer patients to attend for hospital appointments.

32. A special edition of the South Tees 'Beautiful Inside and Out Magazine' was created containing key messages about cancer symptoms, accessing NHS services, and general wellbeing messages. Northern Cancer Alliance funded 22,000 copies of the magazine to be printed and distributed through food banks across North Cumbria and the North East, with around 2000 copies being distributed to residents in Middlesbrough.

### **COVID-19 Education Offer: Children and Young People's Emotional Mental Health and Wellbeing**

33. HeadStart, Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group, Tees Esk and Wear Valley NHS FT and Voluntary Sector providers have collaborated to offer schools 4-6 weekly sessions of issue based group work to help support those pupils that are struggling as a result of COVID 19.
34. Issues to be addressed include low mood, anxiety, self-harm (including substance misuse), difficulty managing routines (including sleep problems) and transitions. Sessions will commence in September and to date 33 schools and colleges have sessions arranged.

### **Suicide Prevention**

35. In April 2020, Joanne Cook was appointed as the Tees Suicide Prevention Coordinator to lead on the local multi-agency suicide prevention strategy. This is a partnership arrangement between the four Tees Local Authorities, hosting by Middlesbrough Council.
36. An early alert and standard operating procedure has been put in place to respond to suspected suicides across Tees, this means that we have a better understanding of the current picture of suicide numbers, trends and potential clusters. The procedure will facilitate engagement with key partners across a range of settings for the purpose of information sharing to prevent further loss of life. In addition to local monitoring we are part of the regional and national real time data surveillance programme for suspected suicides to determine any links to the current crisis and to be able to respond collectively to any emerging themes.

### **Mental Health Campaigns and Support**

37. Middlesbrough Council have over sixty fully trained Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA) who are able to recognise signs of mental distress, act in a listening and supportive way and signpost staff to support. The MHFA's are part of a network who support each other and receive updates of emerging campaigns and services to support them in this important role. Coordination of MHFA's continues to be a joint effort between HR and Public Health.

**Councillor Dorothy Davison**  
**Executive Member for Adult Social Care & Public Health**