

# Lancashire County Council

## Adult Social Care

### **Winter Plan 2023/24**

Author: Sue Lott, Head of Service

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## 1. Introduction

The Lancashire County Council Winter Plan for Adult Social Care formally comes into operational effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023 and will run until the 14<sup>th</sup> April 2024 incorporating resilience across the Easter period and immediately after it.

The Winter Plan is a necessary and critical part of business continuity planning to set out continuity actions, key risks and mitigations, and the management of these during what is typically a more pressured part of the year across the health and care system. Adult Social Care is focussed on ensuring we are as prepared as possible to meet the likely challenges of winter, as well as delivering year-round resilience. This year's Winter Plan has required the Authority to take account of: -

- the continued challenges and pressures across the health and social care sector
- the likely prevalence of winter Flu and Covid 19
- continued pressures across the care market
- sustained workforce challenges including recruitment, retention and fatigued staff who have experienced no real reduction in pressure since the start of the pandemic in 2020

All Lancashire County Council (LCC) Adult Social Care services have existing year-round resilience and business continuity plans in place, covering various scenarios such as adverse weather or sudden staffing, environment, or IT related events. In addition, the Acute and Intermediate Care services are partners in the health and social care system resilience and business continuity plans and digital escalation system on each Acute Hospital footprint. All teams continue to use these plans to inform response actions, and this Winter Plan sits alongside those with enhanced actions to maintain capacity and resilience throughout this time of year as well as responding to NHS surges and associated impacts on social care demand.

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) wrote to all Local Authorities on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2023 ([see here](#)) regarding winter planning, setting out a range of expectations. The Lancashire Adult Social Care Winter Plan covers those expectations within its narrative, the main points broadly being:

- Working together with the NHS on winter planning
- Ensuring sufficiency of capacity, especially within intermediate care (short term care and support) services
- Ensure effective use of Grants such as the Market Sustainability Improvement Fund (MSIF), especially in relation to workforce
- Reduce delays in people being discharged from hospital

The DHSC also wrote to the NHS on the 27<sup>th</sup> July regarding winter planning ([see here](#)). The letter set out 4 key areas of focus:

- Continue to deliver on the Urgent and Emergency Care (UEC) Recovery Plan by ensuring the 10 (nationally set) high impact interventions are in place
- Completing operational and surge planning to prepare for different winter scenarios
- Integrated Care Boards (ICB) should ensure effective system working across all parts of the system (all health and care organisations)
- Supporting the workforce to deliver over winter

Lancashire Adult Social Care at all levels is actively working together with the NHS and other organisations across the system to plan for winter both strategically and operationally. At an ICS level, the Lancashire & South Cumbria Resilience and Surge Planning Group has



been running since winter 2022/23 with representation from the NHS and all four Upper Tier Local Authorities. Led by the ICB, the group oversees the whole system strategic planning, pulling together the operational plans of individual organisations and local Acute systems. LCC Adult Social Care continues to be an active partner within all levels of strategic and operational winter planning and resilience across the various systems and partnerships, including in relation to the social care elements that support our NHS partners to deliver the NHS 10 high impact interventions referenced in the NHS Winter letter.

Cost of living increases still present challenges impacting on both staff and citizens; increasing the risks to being able to deliver safe care where and when it's needed for example if care providers face financial challenges that impact on business delivery, and to people being able to keep themselves warm and well and maintain their health and wellbeing. Last year, Lancashire County Council put in place a range of services and key actions to help mitigate the impacts, and that ethos continues through this winter.

It is likely that the usual winter pressures seen across the NHS will be exacerbated this year with the very high waiting lists for elective surgeries, plus the added complications of ongoing industrial action which may also impact adversely on the waiting lists.

The challenges across the care market are sustained, with the position in Lancashire continuing to mirror the regional and national picture. The impact varies across Lancashire, and the Authority is continuing to work together with care providers and local partners on mitigating actions. Ensuring that there is sufficient capacity to meet peoples' needs, keep people safe, and enabling continued 'flow' across the system is not to be underestimated and likely to be exacerbated through the winter months.

Adult Social Care has procured new Homecare contracts, which commence during November 2023, and which have seen a really good volume of high quality responses from homecare providers in Lancashire. The ambition is that greater stability and capacity will be realised through new geographical allocations and ways of commissioning, enabling more people to get the support they need at the time they need it. This is also an important enabler to maintaining capacity in the new homebased intermediate care service 'Short Term Care at Home' scheduled to commence in Spring 2024. This builds on the work during the last 2-3 years to incrementally build capacity into some of the critical short term intervention services such as Crisis support and Reablement, to better meet the needs of Lancashire residents who need them. This capacity gives Adult Social Care an improved foundation for our winter planning this year, although it should be noted that not all the capacity is funded on a sustainable recurrent basis, with a significant percentage continuing to be funded via short term monies such as the Better Care Fund (BCF) Additional Discharge Fund which are only in place until March 2025. Unless sustainable funding is identified, this continues to present delivery risks beyond 2025.

In readiness for the implementation of the new Short Term Care at Home service (previously Crisis and Reablement services), several Adult Social Care teams will be working together during the winter months towards the transformation required to ensure effective and efficient use of the service, enabling more people to return to, or remain in, their own home.

Workforce challenges remain, with a fatigued health and social care workforce owing to the continued and sustained pressures since 2020. Recruitment, retention, and staff wellbeing are of paramount importance and concern. Therefore, Adult Social Care winter resilience this year, as it did last year, has at its core the need to ensure the stability of what we already have, with the additional key actions of supporting the effective implementation of new arrangements such as the Homecare service. Given the workforce pressures, our resilience planning cannot be solely dependent on recruiting additional staff.



Within our Winter Plan, the focus remains on ensuring we can deliver high quality and responsive services that enable people to maximise their independence, leave hospital as soon as they no longer need a hospital bed or avoid an unnecessary admission, and remain living in their own home for as long as possible. The plan also sets out the risks to Adult Social Care being able to achieve this and the mitigating actions to be taken.

Lancashire Adult Social Care encompasses various social care and social work services and operates 24/7 365 days a year. Many care services operate continuously, ensuring that people who need care and support get it at the level they need and at the time they need it. In supporting people who need social care assessments, 7-day working (except Christmas Day where the demand for planned assessments is negligible) is in place across teams working around hospital discharge and admission avoidance. Within LCC, several of our services operate on a 24/7 basis including the Mental Health AMHP (Approved Mental Health Professional) team, our Care Homes for Older People, and some of our care services for working aged people with disabilities such as Shared Lives. Outside of core hours, the Lancashire County Council Emergency Duty Team (EDT) for social care responds to urgent situations.

The LCC Adult Social Care Winter Plan dated 21st September 2023 has been signed off by the Adult Services Directorate Leadership Team, approved by Cabinet and shared with relevant managers and staff within the Council. The Plan has been shared with the NHS, care sector providers and other partners locally.

The range of measures and actions set out in the plan and delivery against it will be monitored on a regular basis by the LCC Adult Social Care Winter Group, chaired by the Head of Service for Urgent Care, Acute & Prisons, which will also agree further mitigating actions where required.

Any significant amendments will be communicated via the issue of an updated version of the Plan.

## **2. Planning Context (including risk)**

In addition to the usual considerations of winter and the extra demand that the time of year places on social care, there are several additional factors and risks that have been taken into consideration and influenced the planning for this year.

These include:

### **COVID-19**

The Winter Plan has been developed against the additional pressures that delivering services in the context of COVID-19's continued presence creates for LCC, the NHS and social care providers. The Flu and Covid-19 national vaccination programme has been accelerated with a significant push to encourage people in at risk and eligible groups to take up the vaccination.

### **Care Market Challenges**

The challenges in this sector are seen nationally, and regionally the picture is similar across all North West Local Authorities.



Locally in Lancashire, the pressures are multifactorial including a further increase in the demand for homecare with a 5.8% growth across the last 12 months in the number of people receiving ongoing support, and 92,651 commissioned care hours (August 2023) being delivered per week. This shows a sustained significant growth in both demand and provision, but in the context of the underlying challenges cross the social care sector it demonstrates the need to continue to ensure that care is not over-provided (thus reducing people's independence) to help maintain the availability of care and support for people in need of it.

Risks also exist in relation to the financial uncertainty for many providers, and the Council have this year agreed uplifts broadly averaging between 9-16% to care providers and Care Homes delivering commissioned care. Supporting the stability of the care market remains a priority for the Council within the means and options available to us. Alongside other Local Authorities last year LCC undertook a Fair Cost of Care exercise, with the outputs informing market sustainability work. Responding to uncertainties in how the care market may operate in the months ahead, and the difficulties in reliably estimating demand and capacity in the context of so many other variables make planning a challenge.

The risks of some providers ceasing to operate altogether, or because of workforce capacity needing to reduce the level of service they provide, remains a key risk across the Lancashire care market.

### **Demand and Complexity**

Adult Social Care continues to see increased demand and more people with more complex needs requiring assessment and support.

Significant focus has been placed on reducing waiting times for both social care and occupational therapy (OT) assessments through 2023 so far, which had seen an increase, in part due to the increasing demand and complexity of peoples' needs and circumstances. To support the reduction in waiting times for an OT assessment, additional external resource has been secured and has made a significant impact which will continue into the winter months and enhance the team's ability to see more people more quickly. Similar focus is in place on actions to sustainably reduce waiting times for Care Act assessments, and we are mindful this may have further impact on the requirement for, and capacity of, care hours.

In addition, through hospital 'discharge to assess' arrangements, many more people are now discharged earlier and with a higher level of need than they would previously have been. This adds additional pressures to Adult Social Care both in terms of assessment capacity and in terms of sufficiency of social and short term care and support provision in the community.

A demand and capacity analysis for short term care and support in Lancashire was a requirement of the 2023/24 Better Care Fund (BCF) Plan. Whilst we have acknowledged that there are some challenges with the data locally as the system doesn't collect data in a way that has enabled the analysis to be as robust as it needs to be, the initial analysis shows that broadly, Lancashire has the overall capacity needed to meet demand on a business-as usual-basis. We have included additional short term care and support capacity meet surge demand in our Winter Plan, as well as to support transformation (see later section), and are working closely with the national BCF Support Team to improve our demand and capacity data, modelling and analysis.



## **NHS / Collaborative Winter Planning**

The NHS locally is submitting a Winter Plan using the nationally mandated planning templates, which also direct Integrated Care Boards to ensure effective system working across the winter period. The templates include both a narrative plan and numerical information including trajectories towards set targets. Recently, local NHS partners completed a self-assessment against 10 'High Impact Interventions' with each of the Acute systems prioritising 4 of the 10 to focus on over the next few months.

Of the 10 interventions, although most will impact social care in some way at least 3 will require active Adult Social Care support and interventions, these being:

- Improving Community Bed productivity and flow (including mental health beds)
- Implementing Care Transfer Hubs
- Intermediate Care (short term care and support) demand and capacity

Lancashire Adult Social Care has worked in collaboration with all key partners to develop our Winter Plan, including the NHS, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector, and providers across the care market. In turn, we have collaborated with the NHS and key partners in the development of wider system plans. Our Adult Social Care Winter Plan is not limited to only those people who receive Local Authority funded care, but also ensures that where appropriate, key actions apply to those who fund their own care. We have also detailed the support offered to informal carers.

Across the winter period and beyond we will continue to work closely with partners, in particular the care market, to ensure that relevant advice and guidance is promoted and implemented, and where appropriate localised flexibility is applied.

## **Discharge to Assess (D2A)**

Together with health and care partners across Lancashire and South Cumbria, Lancashire operates in line with Section 91 of the Health and Care Act (July 2022) and the preferred model of 'Discharge to Assess'. The national 'Hospital Discharge and Community Support Guidance (March 2022)' sets out good practice and expectations, detailing that discharges should happen within the same day, ideally within 2 hours, and that all discharges must be safe.

We are aware that a revised version of the national guidance is due for release in Autumn 2023, and our teams will work collaboratively with partners to understand and implement any appropriate changes.

Capacity in short term care and support and other services which support people to be discharged as soon as they no longer need a hospital bed are underpinned by the Additional Discharge Fund monies in this year's BCF.

## **2 Hour Urgent Care Response**

2-hour Crisis Response services are delivered by the NHS locally in line with national requirements, and one of the 10 NHS High Impact Interventions is to increase the volume of this service. The service is delivered across Lancashire & South Cumbria and provides an 8am-8pm 2hr urgent care response to people aged 18+ who are experiencing a crisis which needs an urgent NHS community intervention to be able to remain in their own home and avoid a hospital admission. This includes people who reside in a Care Home.





The guidance also includes a 2-hour response where there is a breakdown in informal caring arrangements, and which would have an impact on the person's health.

The additional call on social care services has been monitored since the commencement of the service in 2022 and remains manageable within existing capacity. Given the potential impact on the care market with any increase in volume of this service during winter 2023/24, demand for social care for people following a 2 hour urgent care response will continue to be monitored during the winter months.

### **Virtual Wards**

This national NHS initiative enables people (where clinically appropriate) who would otherwise be in hospital to get the healthcare they need at home, safely and conveniently. Acute care, monitoring and treatment is provided alongside wrap around support, and a ramp up plan to operate 746 'beds' across Lancashire and South Cumbria is progressing, with 398 'beds' in place as of August 2023.

This is a key priority for the ICB and its transformation work and Adult Social Care will continue to work closely with our NHS partners across the winter period to understand and monitor any requirement for social care support to people in the virtual wards, and what this may look like.

### **NHS Hospital Bed Pressures**

Local NHS bed modelling shows an anticipated significant bed pressure in each of the local hospitals across the winter period, and plans are in place to mitigate against these as far as possible. Adult Social Care are working collaboratively with NHS partners to mitigate pressures, including the reduction in the number of people who have 'No Criteria to Reside' and no longer need a hospital bed but have not been discharged in a timely way.

The announcement of a £250m investment in additional beds by the Government on 15.8.2023 saw just under £20m come to Lancashire & South Cumbria, to be used by two hospitals, Lancashire Teaching Hospitals and East Lancashire Hospitals Trust. The use of the monies within each Trust are on schemes that will not directly impact social care demand, and so at this stage are not included in our planning context.

### **Workforce**

Our workforce is our biggest asset, and our focus is on not setting out actions that could destabilise the capacity that we have. We have therefore in our planning not set out high numbers of schemes which are workforce dependent as this could adversely impact on the resilience and wellbeing of staff in already fragile services. Issues such as vacancies, absences, and high turnover present greater risks around delivery of safe care and service capacity to meet demand plus the best outcomes for people.

### **Mental Health**

Demand for mental health services increased significantly as a result of the pandemic and its impact on peoples' lives and has remained at a sustained higher level. Winter and the other pressures listed here are likely to add to that demand for in-patient services, for swift and speedy discharges, and for community services.



### **Cost of Living Increases**

Many people remain affected by cost of living increases, with a range of support options in place to help Lancashire residents. The Adult Social Care Plan sets out the risks to peoples' health and wellbeing as well as the delivery of safe and timely care.

LCC has maintained the cost of living webpages, which are continually updated with helpful advice and support. [Cost of living support - Lancashire County Council](#)

## **3. Aims and Objectives**

The aims and objectives of the Lancashire County Council Adult Social Care Winter Plan are:

- To ensure that Lancashire County Council Adult Social Care will meet the needs of citizens who require social care across the winter period
- Within the context of the pressured position of the social care system, ensure as far as possible the provision of social care services of a sufficient volume and quality to keep people safe and supported, and focus on maximising independence
- Ensure that the overriding principle of 'home first' i.e. people should be able to remain in or return to their own home wherever possible, is maintained throughout all decision making at individual and wider commissioning levels
- To maximise Adult Social Care resilience, and support wellbeing, both across the care market and in the Lancashire County Council Adult Social Care assessment and support teams
- Identify, mitigate, and minimise risks across the social care system, and work collaboratively with partners
- Continue to maintain the balance between reducing the risks of infection and transmission, and responding to the need for people to receive care and support
- Ensure care is provided in a way that supports people to remain connected with families and loved ones, supports emotional wellbeing, and reduces loneliness
- Ensure that people consistently have access to, and are connected into, a range of supports that reduce inequalities
- Have due regard and take relevant actions in relation to people and communities who may be more susceptible to infections and illness across the winter period
- Incorporate into resilience planning the potential impacts of the cost of living increases on people, services, and staff.

The following sections highlight the activity/work taking place across several key areas which support our winter resilience.

## **4. Supporting People Who Receive Social Care, the Workforce, and Carers**

Keeping people as safe and enabling them to be as independent as possible, whilst ensuring they get the social care and support they need at the time they need it is integral to this winter plan. Ensuring resilience across the workforce is critical to being able to assess for and deliver social care support.



## **People Who Use Social Care**

A range of measures are outlined in the plan to ensure sufficient care and assessment capacity is in place as far as possible in the current climate to support people across the winter period and beyond. This winter, maintaining the care capacity that is available across the market is an area of focus, especially whilst the new Homecare contracts are being implemented, as well as any potential for additional capacity to meet increasing demand and periods of surge.

The additional capacity and measures in place focus on people who need care and support being able to get the right care, in the right place at the right time. Care is provided in a safe way that upholds peoples' dignity.

This Winter Plan sets out the range of actions and measures being put in place not just for those people who need Local Authority funded care including people who manage their care via a Direct Payment, but also for people who self-fund their care and support but need access to the range of short term care and support services such as Crisis Support and Reablement, to carer support services and to the short term 'discharge to assess' services in operation amongst others.

## **Carers**

Unpaid carers make up a vital part of the support networks for people who need care, with many unpaid carers being the sole carer for their loved ones.

There is a range of information available to carers both on the Lancashire County Council website and through Lancashire Carers Centres. Where unpaid carers are approaching Adult Social Care for support in their caring role, specific carers assessments and support planning are undertaken by local Carers Centres and where required, formal support is provided to the cared for person.

Informal carers are encouraged when having a carers assessment to ensure should they unexpectedly fall ill or require an admission to hospital, that plans are in place to support the cared for person. This includes using services such as the Peace of Mind for Carers scheme which includes access to urgent commissioned support if needed.

Highly Commended in the Municipal Journal Awards, the Lancashire Home Recovery Hospital Discharge scheme is in place which supports unpaid carers, through the use of one-off personal budgets, to care for their loved one on discharge from hospital but where there are practical barriers to them doing so. This scheme improves outcomes for people and their carers and enhances our support to the NHS by enabling people to be discharged more quickly.

## **Workforce**

We know that because of the experience and consequences of the pandemic and the ongoing sustained pressures, we have a social care workforce that is fatigued and experiencing some significant recruitment and retention challenges; this is not unique to Lancashire. Coupled with increasing demand for social care assessments and for care and support, the wellbeing of the workforce is a primary focus.

Lancashire County Council have in place a range of measures to support the health and wellbeing of the Adult Social Care workforce. The Council's Employee Assistance Programme is accessible to all council staff for support with a range of wellbeing issues. Keeping physically and mentally well is a key priority. Information, help, and advice is



available on the intranet via dedicated coronavirus and staff wellbeing pages and regularly updated, and for staff who do not have access to the intranet, this information is also available on the staff section of the LCC website. Staff are supported by their team managers and 1:1 supervisions have a focussed space on wellbeing. In recognition of the current challenges in the service, there is an additional wellbeing action plan in place across the hospital discharge teams specifically.

Business continuity plans are in place across all Adult Social Care teams to mitigate in the event of issues such as increased staff absences across winter.

In supporting people who need social care assessments, 7-day working is in place across several teams working around hospital discharge and avoidance, plus the Mental Health AMHP team and LCC Care Services operating 24/7 services. Outside of core working hours, the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) responds to urgent situations.

The Lancashire & South Cumbria Resilience Hub remains in place, which is a mental health and wellbeing support resource for all public sector workers, care staff and volunteers. More information on the Hub is available via <https://lscresiliencehub.nhs.uk/>

To maintain sufficient LCC Adult Social Care workforce capacity to meet demands across the most pressured part of the year, annual leave is restricted across December and January to ensure 80% of the workforce is in work, with a minimum of 60% in work in-between Christmas and the New Year. The named Intermediate Care Allocation Team (ICAT), Central Allocation To Care & Health (CATCH) and Care Navigation staff rostered to work across the Christmas and New Year period (weekend and public holidays) to support the hospitals are shared within each Acute footprint partnership. The response to hospital discharge and admission avoidance across the holiday period continues to be a 7-day service, except for Christmas Day where emergencies are covered by EDT.

Care providers also have business continuity plans in place that contain actions to be taken in respect of winter challenges such as inclement weather, workforce challenges and infection outbreaks. Where services are commissioned by LCC from care providers, the presence and content of the business continuity plans are confirmed to the council, providing assurance.

## **5. Preventing and Controlling the Spread of Infection Within Social Care**

We continue to live with Covid-19, including ongoing sensible precautions and actions, Lancashire Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) teams also oversee mitigating actions for other infections and illnesses across this winter.

### **Provider Engagement & Guidance**

All care providers are registered as being compliant with the [Code of Practice on the prevention and control of infections](#) and the IPC Team at Lancashire County Council supports all providers to ensure that they meet the criteria. This ensures that care is provided in an appropriate environment with all appropriate standards in place to prevent a wide range of infections.

Key messages on Infection Prevention & Control information and guidance are shared by the IPC Team directly to care settings, through targeted social media and via a dedicated webpage on the Council intranet and internet.



Emphasis is on managing the range of respiratory infections, reducing outbreaks and supporting care settings, especially those with people with additional health needs, and care providers to take up offers of vaccines for flu and covid.

## **COVID-19**

As we learn to live safely with COVID-19 the LCC IPC Team have continued to support providers where needed with working safely, lifting visiting restrictions in care homes, and managing COVID-19 outbreaks and onward recovery. The latest guidance for care settings, including use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is as below, with all care providers taking account of this in their business continuity planning:

[COVID-19 supplement to the infection prevention and control resource for adult social care - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-supplement-to-the-infection-prevention-and-control-resource-for-adult-social-care)

[Infection prevention and control: resource for adult social care - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/infection-prevention-and-control-resource-for-adult-social-care)

[Infection prevention and control in adult social care: COVID-19 supplement - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/infection-prevention-and-control-in-adult-social-care-covid-19-supplement)

[COVID-19 PPE guide for adult social care services and settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-ppe-guide-for-adult-social-care-services-and-settings)

Covid-19 plans remain in place at a whole population level in relation to responding to Covid-19 outbreaks and set out options that can be taken where appropriate and necessary to contain and reduce transmission.

## **Flu**

Local authorities have a responsibility to provide information and advice to relevant bodies within their areas, to protect the health of the population, The Lancashire County Council Health Protection and IPC Teams provide this advice and support along with other actions to increase uptake of the vaccine.

As we move into the winter period, the prevalence of flu increases. There is a real possibility that the impact of flu will be greater this year due to the very low levels seen during the last 2 winters and therefore peoples' lower immunity to it, plus the higher levels of social interaction of people through the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions.

In response, the Government are again setting off a large national flu campaign, encouraging everyone who is eligible to take up the flu vaccine alongside the Covid-19 booster jab for those people who are eligible for that too. This information and reminders to take up the vaccine has been promoted to all care providers through the regular IPC channels.

In addition to the national programme, the LCC Health Protection Service will be undertaking an annual workforce programme including flu awareness briefings and a wider campaign across the county to encourage and increase protection across LCC staff. For those staff under 65 years old and who aren't in one of the high risk groups (and will therefore receive their vaccination via the NHS), the County Council will run sessions across various LCC offices where staff can take up the vaccination. Staff also have the option to claim the cost of the vaccine if they pay for one at a pharmacy of their choice.



All staff across Adult Social Care have been encouraged to take up the seasonal flu vaccine to support keeping our teams well over winter and enhancing our overall resilience and service capacity.

## **6. Service Stability, Innovations and Additional Winter Capacity**

The work in recent years to bring greater stability, by using the improved BCF, to some of the service and workforce capacity funded through short term monies, gives a greater level of year-round resilience with posts being more attractive to prospective applicants as they are permanent contracts. Our focus remains on those services which continue to experience higher than average turnover and are more challenging to recruit to including the teams supporting mental and physical health hospital discharge.

Under the Lancashire Intermediate Care transformation programme, the Council's homebased short term care services including 'Crisis Support' and 'Reablement' are currently being re-procured under a new specification which merges the services to become one 'Short Term Care at Home' service. Within the Intermediate Care transformation programme, bed based short term rehabilitative care is also evolving to incorporate a wider recovery, recuperation and reabling/rehabilitation scope including 'discharge to assess'. The way that our social work teams operate within 'intermediate care' is also changing across the winter period, enabling a more streamlined and personalised approach to maximising people's independence and well as improving the management of service capacity.

In advance of the new services being in place, plans have been developed to look at what may be required in terms of additional social care capacity within the financial envelope available to meet surge demand, and, importantly, what is realistic for the care providers to deliver given the pressures across the care market and continuing challenges with recruitment and retention.

### **Residential Rehab/Community Beds**

Within the LCC Intermediate Care programme, work is underway to transform and maximise the use of the residential rehabilitation beds provided by LCC's Older People's Care Services across the county. Several schemes/actions are in progress during the winter period with the aim to support more people who need the service: -

- **Single Handed Care** – up to date moving and handling equipment has been purchased for the LCC units and ceiling track hoists have been installed in 20 rooms across the county to support safer and more independent transfers for people with more complex needs.
- **Expanded scope** – the service is widening the scope of how the beds are used to support people who need time to recover and recuperate, and then where appropriate offer a short term reabling or rehabilitation service. The beds will also be used to support people (at a residential level) leaving hospital who would previously have had a 'discharge to assess' stay in a care home setting. The ambition is that by taking more people through a recovery and reabling service, more people will have the opportunity to return home.
- **Complexity** – The service will ramp up capacity to take more people with more complex needs, developing a staffing model that will best support this.
- **Enhanced links with Reablement** – as part of the short term care and support transformation work across this winter the service will develop stronger connections with the Reablement team, enabling in-reach and opportunities for people to return home more quickly.



- **Temporary Beds** - A small number of beds continue to be ringfenced in some of LCC's Older People's Care Services' residential care homes to support the care market challenges and 'bridge the gap' where people need to leave hospital but the identified care immediately available.

### **Positive Ageing & Mental Health Wellbeing Beds**

The Positive Ageing and Mental Health Wellbeing short term care beds service has been in place for just over 12 months. This innovative service is a collaboration across LCC (Older Peoples' Care Services and the Mental Health team) and Lancashire & South Cumbria Foundation Trust and comprises of 9 beds in Lady Elsie Finney House in Preston alongside wrap around Psychological, therapeutic, and practical support.

The innovative model, which was recently a finalist in the Local Government Chronicle Awards, provides a bed based reabling approach for older adults with a mental health need, including Dementia, taking people from out-of-area mental health hospitals, and from local Acute Hospitals. The service approach is coordinated and supported by an enhanced multi-agency team to support more people to return to their own home, reduce the length of stay in hospitals, or avoid unnecessary admissions.

### **Hospital Aftercare Service (Age UK)**

The Hospital Aftercare Service is aligned to each Acute Trust across Lancashire. It works alongside discharge teams and NHS colleagues to support timely discharge from both the wards and the Emergency Department, for people who need some lower level social care support. The service also supports people being discharged from Mental Health hospitals.

The Hospital Aftercare Service which is delivered by Age UK on behalf of Lancashire County Council includes "Take Home & Settle" (Tier 1) which provides immediate support for up to 3 hours, and "Follow-up and Support" (Tier 2) which provides low level support for up to six weeks of up to 15 hours over the period.

To further promote the use of the service and reduce reliance on formal support, the service is co-located with each of the 5 ICAT/CATCH teams across the County and has a positive impact on diverting people into less intensive support to facilitate hospital discharge.

### **Workforce**

Recruitment and retention challenges remain, and therefore this winter plan is not solely reliant on additional staff to avoid as far as possible adverse impact on workforce stability. Additional workforce capacity is required to deliver the additional Home First and Reablement hours, but work has been undertaken to establish what is realistic and how best to procure with the least risk of a destabilising impact on the care market.

All Local Authorities recently received monies under the Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund, with the Grant conditions specifying that the monies are to be used in one or more of 3 key areas:

- Increase of fee rates paid to adult social care providers
- Increase adult social care workforce capacity and retention
- Reduce adult social care waiting times

Lancashire is finalising plans for use of the Grant, with allocations to any of the 3 key areas contributing to strengthened resilience across the winter months.



Work also continues across the health and care sectors in relation to international recruitment and ways to encourage and enable people to join the workforce across Lancashire and South Cumbria in a safe and supported way.

### **Mental Health**

Adult Social Care teams and the 24/7 Approved Mental Health Practitioner (AMHP) service work together with NHS partners to support to access the right treatment and support for their needs, in a timely way.

We recognise that the volume of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DOLS) has increased since the introduction of discharge to assess arrangements from hospital, with an increased demand across the winter months where hospital discharge activity increases. In recognition we have added additional capacity for Section 12 Doctors assessments in our Winter Plan.

Mental Health Wellbeing teams are now in place and provide short term social care interventions and personalised support to work alongside the person with care and support needs. Through a strengths-based approach, people have the control over their own lives using a timely intervention that builds their confidence, lessens their economic disadvantage, builds their social network, and lessens the longer term impacts that come from inactivity (worsening mental and physical health). The teams are aligned to the Primary Care Networks and the Community Mental Health Hubs.

### **Housing, Adaptations and Community Equipment**

In partnership with District Councils, we commenced a test of concept towards the end of last winter of a new role of 'Health and Housing Coordinators'. The Coordinators are co-located with the ICAT/CATCH multiagency hubs and support timely hospital discharge where housing and accommodation related issues are a barrier. The project implementation is ramping up to full capacity across winter so that there will be at least one Coordinator aligned to each Acute Trust footprint.

Since implementation, the Coordinators have supported people with a variety of housing and accommodation related needs, reducing delays and removing barriers to more people being able to return directly home. Especially during the winter period, rapid access to the housing expertise and services provided by the District Councils will enable more people to be safe, warm and comfortable in their home environment.

In addition to the usual access routes for assessment for community equipment, 'Trusted Assessor' schemes with some of our home improvement and housing partners whereby certain items of community equipment can be provided by the staff who are undertaking other home improvement tasks in the person's accommodation are in place. This supports the prevention of falls and accidents in the home and improves peoples' independence and our ambition is to extend this to more partners during this winter period so that more people can get the equipment they need quickly.

### **Digital Technology**

Wearable and movable technology has been purchased and will be used by the hospital discharge teams. These technology items support timely hospital discharge or admission avoidance, bringing the ability to alert family or responders in an emergency as well as passive monitoring to support people's safety in their own home.





See **Appendix A** for the table detailing additional winter capacity. The majority of the additional capacity outlined is to be funded through the use of specific adults services reserves. As such, this funding is non-recurring and unless alternative funding can be sourced for any schemes which may need or be recommended to continue, exit strategies will need to be developed to cease these services alongside those purely for winter surge capacity at the end of the funded period as outlined in Appendix A for each scheme. These schemes include:

### **Crisis & Reablement Hours**

An additional up to 800 Crisis/Home First hours per week across the winter period have been identified to support people to remain in their own home who are at risk of hospital or residential care admission without urgent support, or to be discharged quickly from hospital. The support is provided for up to 72 hours (or 5 days on discharge from hospital) and can be anything from a one-off hour to continuous support.

An additional up to 450 Reablement hours per week across the winter period have been identified if required in anticipation of more people being discharged from hospital more quickly. Delivery is wholly dependent on the provider's capacity to staff up to this level.

### **Staffing**

Funding is identified in our winter plan for staff overtime within the teams that support system flow, including Acute and Mental Health Discharges, Reablement and Intermediate Care. This will support the teams to respond to demand surges and increases and maintain system flow.

Support to the care market is in place including the uplifting of fees in recognition of the increased costs.

We have also put in place additional short term management capacity across LCC commissioning and discharge teams to support the tactical management of increased escalation and operational response, and market management and support.

Mental Health: By prioritising system pressures, the safety of people awaiting initial assessment is being compromised. To sustain optimal response to system pressures and to people needing Mental Health Act assessments, additional AMHP resource is needed across the winter months.

Funding has been identified to facilitate additional resource to provide improved capacity across the 7 days.

### **VCFSE**

During winter we will be working with our Voluntary Community Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) partners to look at some market stimulation and additional capacity. This links to our plans in reducing reliance on commissioned care for lower-level support tasks, and increase choice and opportunities through VCFSE organisations. By releasing Homecare capacity, this will support more people across the winter months to get the help they need at the time they need it and return directly to or remain in their own home.

## **7. Collaboration across Health and Care Services**

Lancashire County Council Adult Social Care have worked together with the NHS and other partners on winter planning, risk mitigation and opportunities for mutual aid.



Additional short notice funding for the NHS in relation to reducing discharge delays was announced on the 14<sup>th</sup> September 2023, and LCC will be working closely with the ICB and other partners in the deployment of the funding in Lancashire & South Cumbria.

### **Hospital Discharge**

The national Hospital Discharge and Community Services Guidance which supports the hospital discharge sections of the Health and Care Act (2022) sets out good practice and requirements around operating a discharge to assess model. Lancashire and South Cumbria have a standardised operating model and principles to promote equity of delivery across the 5 local acute hospital footprints. Continued collaboration to ensure 'flow' in and out of the hospitals is an essential element to the system managing across the winter period.

Through use of the BCF Additional Discharge Fund, both the ICB and LCC are commissioning additional home and bed based short term support to enable people to leave hospital quickly under discharge to assess arrangements. Both partners are committed to reviewing the effectiveness of the pathway and conversations are taking place with the national BCF Support Team to secure support to undertake this during the winter period.

### **Winter Planning**

Work has taken place across all partners on each Acute hospital footprint to develop system winter plans, and which have fed into the Lancashire & South Cumbria ICB System Winter Plan which is submitted to NHS England. The system plans are predicated on having sufficient capacity in place across the community, short term care and support services, and within the hospitals themselves to avoid hospitals becoming overcrowded and that they remain safe places for patients and staff. The plans also focus on admission avoidance.

The Lancashire County Council Adult Social Care Winter Plan is a key element of the system plans in the contribution to how social care and health will maintain resilience across key services and meet the needs of citizens.

### **Care Settings**

As a health and care system we continue to work together to support people to return to the home they were in prior to a hospital admission wherever possible and avoid unnecessary disruption to their lives. Where people need to enter a care home placement, IPC measures are in place to mitigate transmission of infection, especially where people are transferring from a hospital.

Provision under 'Enhanced Health in Care Homes' is in place across Lancashire through additional support from GPs as part of their contract, with all care homes having a designated clinical lead. Various arrangements are in place across the County under the framework including the sharing of health advice and information with care homes through local digital platforms, the provision of enhanced support through health care home support teams, the ability to provide GP consultations via video technology and the clustering of care homes into designated Primary Care Networks.

### **Digital Social Care Records**

The Council are a full partner in the Lancashire & South Cumbria Digital Social Care Records (DSCR) project. The Digital Adoption and Transformation in Regulated Care Team have supported local care homes to purchase a new digital social care record system from the NHS Assured Supplier List. Using 3 NHS grants (the DSCR Programme, the Unified



Tech Fund, and the Digital Transformation fund) the team have supported 50 care homes so far to move from paper to electronic records, with a further 180 care providers being actively worked with. Communities of practice are being set up with the care providers to help maximise the functionality.

These digital social care records play an important role in joining up care across social care and the NHS, freeing up time spent by social care workers and managers on administrative tasks, whilst equipping them with the information they need to deliver care. They are the platform on which other remote care tools can integrate and can enable the greater personalisation of care planning that focuses on the individual.

### **Escalation and Resilience**

Adult Social Care teams working around hospital discharge provide a daily report into the NHS Escalation Management System Plus (EMS Plus) in place across the Integrated Care System. LCC Hospital Discharge and ICAT/CATCH teams add their weighted team status into the dashboard each day giving visibility of capacity, challenges, and pinch points. Mental Health also has an escalation system which is being piloted across the East Lancashire and Blackburn with Darwen geography.

Sitting behind the escalation system is a set of action cards detailing the response of each organisation when any partnership across an Acute Hospital footprint reaches set standardised escalation trigger levels.

Lancashire County Council Adult Social Care have resilience and business continuity plans in place and have stress tested these. Care providers equally have these plans in place, and many have enacted them across the last few years. The Lancashire County Council Contracts service works closely with care providers in ensuring plans are in place and appropriate business continuity actions are mobilised as required.

All care home and homecare providers upload their information regarding staffing, vaccinations, occupancy, PPE levels or new covid-19 infections etc onto the NECS (North of England Commissioning Service) Capacity Tracker. The information supplied by providers enables visibility of pinch points and where urgent support is required and high-level data extraction is used as part of the daily ICS system resilience reporting.

## **8. Prisons**

There are 5 male prisons within Lancashire, with varying degrees of social care demand. Winter resilience planning by the two health and social care providers who are contracted to deliver support across the Prisons has taken place, to ensure that they have robust contingency plans to meet unexpected challenges, as well as delivering on the annual vaccination campaign.

Measures are in place to ensure that the men receive essential social care assessments and support even when tighter restrictions are in place such as infection outbreak response.

Adult Social Care are working closely with Prison Governors to ensure the delivery of social care to the men in custody mirrors as closely as possible the care and support they would expect to receive in the community.

A 'Buddy/Peer Support' scheme is now in operation as a shared programme between the Prisons and Adult Social Care locally and the national organisation RECOOP, training a



small number of prisoners to deliver some defined low level support, which enables those men receiving it to have greater levels of independence, wellbeing and emotional support. This is especially important across the winter months which can adversely affect mental wellbeing as well as physical health.

## **9. Public Health**

Public Health have a primary focus on the health and wellbeing of all residents of Lancashire. There are many schemes and services that benefit people through the winter period, including: -

### **Affordable Warmth**

Lancashire County Council works in partnership with the district councils to secure national Energy Company Obligation and other external funding through the [Cosy Homes in Lancashire](#) (CHiL) scheme for domestic energy efficiency measures. These include insulation, external door and window upgrades, heating measures and renewable energy technologies. CHiL can signpost to support with fuel debt, fuel bills, switching energy supplier etc. CHiL projects target those households living in fuel poverty and at greatest risk of their health being affected by having a cold home, but also provides an offer of support to all households.

Cold and damp homes, especially in winter, have impacts on people's health and wellbeing and consequently on health and social care services. In advance of winter and following the success of last year, Lancashire County Council has launched the £1m Affordable Warmth Lancashire Fund to help and protect vulnerable residents across Lancashire to heat their homes more efficiently and live in warmer homes. The fund is being distributed across the District Councils in Lancashire, who will allocate the funding to assist residents on low incomes and those who are particularly vulnerable to the health effects of living in a cold home. District councils will work with vulnerable residents to apply appropriate measures, that will improve the insulation and heating systems within people's homes including making them more energy efficient.

### **Advice On Managing Energy Bills**

Preston Citizens Advice have a project funded by British Gas to provide fuel-related advice. They cover the whole of Lancashire, and provide residents with a range of support, including how to deal with fuel debt, energy saving tips and information, budgeting support, and exploring options to obtain additional funding.

The team can be contacted by email at [energysupport@prestoncitizensadvice.org.uk](mailto:energysupport@prestoncitizensadvice.org.uk)

### **Help with Essential Household Items**

The Essential Household Goods Support Scheme is run through Selnet and provides free essential household items to those individuals/families who do not have access to sufficient income or funds to meet their immediate needs, along with help and advice in seeking additional support.

The [Scheme](#) is available to people living in the administrative boundary of Lancashire County Council. Applications must be made by an approved referral organisation.

Further information is provided on the Selnet webpage: <https://selnet-underoneroof.org.uk/>



and Selnets can be contacted using the contact details below:

Office number: 01772 200690

Free phone number: 0800 246 5740

Email address: [underoneroof@selnets-uk.com](mailto:underoneroof@selnets-uk.com)

### **Welfare Rights**

The Welfare Rights Service (WRS) provides comprehensive and independent advice and assistance to Lancashire residents of working age with complex benefit issues, such as appealing decisions and pursuing legal remedies to unfair treatment affecting benefit entitlement. Customers can access the service by referral from our referral partners i.e. any Lancashire County Council service, other community services such as Citizens Advice, district councils, MPs, specialist nurses, mental health services and other community service and organisations.

The WRS provides advice and support to people over pension age with any benefit issue, so whether it's checking to see if there is anything that can be claimed to top-up pensions, or benefits that will help older people to remain living independently such as Attendance Allowance, Pension Credit, or Council Tax discounts, we can help. People over pension age can ring the pensioner benefits helpline on 01772 533321 to speak with an adviser or to leave a message when staff are not available, and they will receive a call back.

Welfare Rights keeps its website updated with benefits related news and changes that are important for residents and professionals working with residents to understand. Some changes such as the ending of Tax Credits and migrating people on to Universal Credit are explained in more detail: <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/benefits-and-financial-help/moving-to-universal-credit-from-other-benefits/>

Further information on benefits, how to access the service, and benefits training for professionals can be found at <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/benefits-and-financial-help>.

### **Good Day Calls**

Public Health have allocated funding to continue this service which commenced last winter, through to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. The service is delivered by AgeUK and provides a regular check in and welfare telephone call to people who benefit from the remote support to enhance and maintain their wellbeing through the winter months.

## **10. Communications Arrangements**

### **Winter**

Lancashire County Council has a dedicated 'Winter' page on the website delivering advice to residents such as how to keep warm and well plus information regarding travel, gritting and weather forecasts. Links are provided to partner sites including advice from the NHS and Lancashire Fire and Rescue.

Helpful advice is provided on the site regarding how to prepare for inclement weather and advice around 'choosing well' in relation to accessing health services and not increasing unnecessary pressure on GP surgeries and Hospitals. Residents are encouraged to take up the flu jab, particularly if they are entitled to a free vaccination, and to encourage older or



vulnerable friends, family, and neighbours to do the same. Eligible people are also encouraged to take up the COVID-19 vaccine to continue to protect themselves.

The Lancashire County Council Winter site will continue to be updated with relevant information and advice throughout the winter period. During bad weather social media and press releases are used to remind people to take care and encourage neighbours to visit those who may be vulnerable living nearby. Key stakeholders are updated about the situation and any effects on service delivery.

All staff are encouraged to share key messages relating to winter, winter wellness and winter wellbeing, including with colleagues and with people who need care and support.

### **Short Term Care and Support Capacity**

Capacity and usage information regarding short term care and support services is circulated daily to key staff across partner agencies via the Lancashire County Council Care Navigation service. This gives critical information to help good decision making in supporting people to access the right services for their needs.



## Appendix A: Table of Additional Capacity

Item	Detail
Continuation and extension of services	continuation of increased service and capacity levels include staffing and service capacity
Additional Crisis & Home First hours for 2022/23.	Additional up to 800 hours per week across the 7 months of winter
Additional winter 'buffer'	Winter 'contingency buffer' – dependent upon recruitment and market position
Reablement	Additional up to 450 hours per week across the 7 months of winter
Workforce - overtime	Funding allocation to support overtime in times of surge and pressure
Assistive Tech	Small quantity of Chiptech GOs for use by each ICAT and CATCH Team
Workforce – additional AMHP capacity at weekends	Additional AMHP capacity to support winter pressures and increases in demand
Assistive technology and community equipment – Community Beds	Technology and equipment for the LCC community beds to support people to maximise their independence
Workforce – BCF support	Staffing resource to support the Lancashire BCF review, supporting sustainability of capacity
Workforce – tactical management capacity	2 x G10 for 7 months across winter to support the management of resilience through winter and transformation, and tactical response to surge
Workforce - Care Navigation	Additional care navigation posts in the residential care finding service which supports Hospital Discharge, and the homecare service required for 7 months to bolster winter resilience and meet surge demands
DOLS (Deprivation Of Liberty Safeguards)	Additional section 12 Doctor capacity to meet the increased volume of DOLS across winter
Trusted Assessor – community equipment	Trusted assessor training for some short term care providers and housing partners re assessments for community equipment
Trusted Assessor – short term care and support provision	Additional staffing for short term care and support providers to test undertaking trusted assessments to support service capacity across winter
VCFSE – pump prime	Market stimulation to enhance the capacity to support people with low level social care needs, releasing capacity for regulated care tasks

