

## **Appendix A – Care Homes and Covid 19 in Barnet**

### **Introduction**

There are 85 registered care and nursing homes in Barnet, with 2550 beds. This includes homes for adults over 65 and for adults of working age. Barnet has the second highest number of total care home beds in London and the highest number of care home beds for people over 65 in London. With such a large care provider sector in the borough and cognisant of its duties under S5 of the Care Act 2014, the council has for a number of years ensured that it provides support to care homes and other care providers in the borough. The council has an established Care Quality Team of 14 staff, which provides advice, training and support to care settings. This includes support and learning networks for all registered managers; and training initiatives such as the Significant 7 and safeguarding training. The team works closely with CQC and the CCG to provide both proactive and reactive support. Since the start of the pandemic, the council and CCG have increased the level of support provided to care providers. This has included free PPE, infection prevention and control (IPC) training, 7 day a week support from Public Health and the Care Quality Team; support with essential supplies and business continuity; and the creation of a dedicated GP clinical lead for each care home and a clinical in-reach team for care homes, staffed by community health staff.

Each local authority was required to produce a care home support plan for review by the department of health and social care earlier in the year. This document is attached as Appendix C and has been published on the council's website. That document gives an overview of the support provided. Appendix B sets out more details on infection levels, whilst this appendix sets out more details on the clinical support provided and gives updates on key developments since the plan was published.

#### **1. GP clinical lead and clinical in-reach**

Prior to the pandemic, there was already a significant focus within the NHS on work to ensure that primary care and community health services provided an enhanced level of care to people who live in care homes.

In March 2020, NHSE/I published the Enhanced Health in Care Homes (EHCH) Network Contract Directed Enhanced Service (DES) and accompanying EHCH Framework (EHCHF) with the intention that this would be delivered from 1st October. During COVID-19, on 1st May, NHSE/I published a letter asking primary care and community health services to provide a minimum level enhanced support to care homes from 15th May.

37% of North Central London's care homes are located within Barnet, making up 44% of the NCL care home bed base, but despite this, Barnet has historically been the only NCL borough without an in-reach model of clinical support, to provide enhanced healthcare support to some of the borough's most clinically vulnerable residents. The need to provide

the right clinical offer to care homes became even more acute during the early weeks of the pandemic.

In response to this, and the requirements set out in the NHSE/I letter, a task and finish group including health and social care representatives and a range of clinicians, developed and mobilised a Covid19 focused in-reach offer for Barnet's care homes which went live in May 2020.

This was a nurse led intervention working in partnership with GPs to provide a specialist and multidisciplinary approach to registered nursing and residential homes that had the highest number of non-elective hospital admissions, alongside homes which were identified as needing additional support during the Covid-19 response.

This service, the Barnet One Care Home Team, has three primary functions:

- a) To support the review of patients identified as a clinical priority for multi-disciplinary assessment and care, identified through the General Practice weekly 'check in' with care homes.
- b) To support the delivery of personalised care and support plans for care home residents.
- c) To provide medication support to care homes.

The One Care Home Team worked alongside the council's Care Quality and Public Health teams to provide wrap-around support to homes throughout the pandemic period.

The CCG also launched a new Locally Commissioned Service (LCS) with GP Practices, to support general practice to deliver the national clinical support requirements for nursing and residential care, and enable primary care to respond effectively to the additional pressure Covid-19 placed on the care of patients in this cohort. All practices with patients resident in a CQC registered care home signed up to offer the LCS, and each care home received a letter detailing the new LCS and confirming their named GP practice. Each home also has a named clinical lead responsible for weekly check-ins and linked to the One Care Home Team to provide personalised care and support plans for residents. Though an interim model, this echoes many of the requirements in the more comprehensive Enhanced Health in Care Homes service DES. By putting in place the LCS and care support offer, the local system has already implemented core elements of the DES in preparation for the full service to be in place from October 2020.

Building on the learning gained throughout the period, the Integrated Care Partnership is now overseeing the development of a long term clinical model for Barnet's care homes, in line with the requirements of the DES and informed by the Enhanced Health in Care Homes Framework. A task and finish group, reporting to the ICP Delivery Board, including leads from the CCG, council, Primary Care Network Clinical Directors, the local acute hospital and the community services provider, is working to design the future in reach offer.

The consensus is that a community based clinical in-reach team comprising of matrons and other allied professionals, along with access to specialist input from geriatricians and other specialists when required, provides the highest level of quality care. The model is based on best practice and evidenced through similar schemes currently available in other NCL boroughs where such provision has demonstrated improved outcomes for people and for reduced activity in secondary care.

## **2. Testing**

Care Homes can now receive regular testing for all residents and staff. Staff are tested on a weekly basis and residents on a monthly basis. This regular testing was initiated by department for health and social care (Department for Health and Social Care). Initially care homes with residents aged 65+ or dementia were prioritised, with a priority list generated by Care Quality Team considering older adults, number of new cases, recurring cases or concerns and larger care homes.

As from the 7<sup>th</sup> September 2020 all care homes are able to apply for regular testing (weekly testing for staff and monthly testing for residents), by registering on the government portal <https://www.gov.uk/apply-coronavirus-test-care-home>.

The majority of older adults care homes have testing in place for staff on a weekly basis (76%) and residents (82%). 8 Older adults homes are not carrying out any regular testing.

There have been delays in the expansion of the national testing offer to working age adults care homes, Extra Care and Supported Living services. To ensure that these care settings have testing in place the Council has worked with CLCH and North Central London ICS to deliver testing across these care settings. This testing offer is still available and is targeted where testing cannot be sought through the national route.

Testing for staff is available for the national portal or staff with Covid-19 symptoms can arrange testing through NCL testing capacities.

## **3. Visiting policy**

The Council has a visiting policy which summarises the national guidance and sets out the local policy in Barnet, based on local evidence of the infection spread, and describes how the guidance will be implemented.

The policy supports visits to care settings under the following conditions:

- There is no evidence of local community transmission or clusters or outbreaks related to care settings of Covid-19 in Barnet.

- Care settings have followed government guidance, have a visiting policy in place and have undertaken a risk assessment.
- There are no Covid-19 cases recorded at the home (or have been recorded within the past 14 days)

This policy is regularly reviewed by the Director of Public Health, who has the responsibility in statutory guidance to assess the risk of allowing visitors to care settings and provide recommendations to care settings in respect of visiting. The policy is regularly reviewed and may be changed depending on prevalence of Covid-19 within the borough or local areas.

Currently the majority care homes within the borough are allowing visiting, with 11 care homes not allowing visitors due to Covid-19.

#### **4. Winter preparations**

The Council and CCG are continuing to work closely with care providers to prepare for outbreaks or a potential second wave:

- Developing and improving Outbreak Plans for different care settings.
- Support with business continuity planning (and lessons learned).
- Working with health colleagues to ensure good quality infection control training and support continues.
- Providing financial support for care settings to improve infection control.
- Working with system partners across NCL to avoid step-down of Covid positive patients to care homes and to instead make use of intermediate care beds through a new ICS protocol.
- PPE will continue to be provided, as well as care homes now being given free PPE by central government through the national system

The Council has recently carried out a survey of all care providers in the borough to fully understand the current picture in the borough and provide extra targeted support where required. The Care Quality Team will continue to collect data over the winter to inform how we target support and ensure all care providers are prepared to manage future Covid-19 outbreaks.

#### ***DHSC winter plan***

The department of health and social care published its winter plan on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2020, which sets out DHSC's priorities for care homes over the winter to prevent Covid 19 infections. Officers are working through the implications of this plan and liaising with care homes about its recommendations.

## ***North Central London After Action Review***

Barnet council is committed to continuously improving support to care providers through the health and care system. As a result, the council championed the development of an NLC ICS wide after-action review of support to care settings, which recently completed and was chaired and sponsored by the council's executive director of adults and health. The review has led to an agreed ICS wide action plan which is now being implemented, with the aim of providing improved support and processes to care providers over winter and in the event of a second peak of the pandemic. This review is being presented to the North Central London JHOSC at its 25<sup>th</sup> September meeting and the papers outlining the review and its findings are attached here.



NCL JHOSC Agenda  
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