

# REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH & ADULT SOCIAL CARE COUNCILLOR MUSTAFA DESAI

## PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING DIRECTORS: SAYYED OSMAN (ADULT SOCIAL CARE & PREVENTION)

**DATE: 22 July 2021**

### **ALBION MILL**

We are pleased to now be close to opening this fantastic new development in Blackburn, predicted July/August and recruitment of staff has really picked up pace. Final preparations are taking place to ensure a vibrant and busy community atmosphere within Community Hub. The teams are working through referrals to support Independent living and opportunities for individuals to lead a fuller life with the new housing with care scheme, also known as extra care housing.

In addition, the Intermediate Care facility is being inspected by Care Quality Commission for registration approval which will provide high quality, person-centred, short-term therapy led provision to residents from their own home as 'step up' and to those being discharged from hospital as 'step down'.

The scheme has formed partnerships across Blackburn with Darwen Council, the Clinical Commissioning Group, Inclusion Housing Lancashire and South Cumbria Foundation Trust, Local Primary Care GP Federation and Willowbrook Homecare.

Albion Mill is designed with a community hub to provide community activities for residents and the wider community. The Concierge Service will run these activities with the support of the brand new Friends of Albion Mill voluntary group, which already has 30 volunteers and has been successful with a £10,000 lottery bid for equipment. Activities will include learning, exercise, social events, crafts, hobbies and information and advice from groups like BwD Age UK and the Care Network. The Concierge Service will run 12 hours a day 365 days a year and will support partners to ensure the Mill is well run and remains spick and span, including daily checks on cleanliness, health and safety and security. For further details, please visit the Concierge Service's Social Media platforms:

Facebook: [AlbionMillCommunityHub](#)

Twitter: [AlbionMillCH](#)

Instagram: [AlbionMillCH](#)

Aerial video: <https://vimeo.com/534898651>

In the run up to opening, work has been undertaken to process and review applications, coordinate care assessments with our care provider Willowbrook Homecare, and allocate suitable apartments. Letters of acceptance to the scheme have now been sent to individuals and approval panel continues to process new applications. We are all very proud of the accommodation and the support that will be provided at Albion Mill and are looking forward to helping individuals move into their homes.

### **HOSPITAL PRESSURES**

Blackburn Royal has been under significant pressure, particularly with a return to routine treatment coinciding with the recent surge in infections due to the Covid Delta Variant. The Hospital has also seen higher numbers of people attend Accident and Emergency, greater than the peak period in winter.

We have therefore been working in Partnership on an approach called the 'Perfect Week' to optimise good practice and help reduce pressure on hospital beds. This means more discharges and greater demand on the council's social care teams.

This has also coincided with outbreaks in care homes and domiciliary care. The council has had to respond on all front and it has been an extremely demanding period.

The good news has been that we have seen a reduction in numbers going into intensive care and lower numbers of people dying,

Therefore whilst we move towards an easing of lockdown restrictions on the 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021, we feel our most vulnerable and the service providers need to continue to maintain high levels of precaution and infection, prevention and control.

## **STRATEGIC COMMISSIONING & FINANCE**

Demands on the Care Sector and the Councils Covid response has increased again with the latest spike in Covid cases within the borough and the increase in cases due to the variant of concern. The Care Sector Response Group continue to meet regularly to provide this response and regular situation reports. We continue to monitor the uptake of vaccinations for both care home residents and staff however despite good level of vaccination a number of our homes have had to manage significant outbreaks and required the support of our in house crisis teams.

Local advice to care homes in the last few weeks has been to restrict visiting to outdoors/pods and not to increase visiting to the numbers proposed in National Guidance. Homes have been advised to facilitate visiting as far as possible based on their own risk assessment but the impact of local advice has been of concern to family and friends who have been unable to visit relatives as they intended. We continue to promote a safe and compassionate approach to visiting and ask registered providers to consider all circumstances and support appropriately.

Covid 19 has had a very significant impact on many of our providers with some struggling to return to previous occupancy levels which is reducing their ability to be financially sustainable. The Commissioning and Finance team continue to support and work closely with all providers across the sector. It would be fair to say that there is increasing concern for the sector the longer Covid-19 goes on. Poses risk of future viability.

The team are recruiting additional temporary resources to provide a dedicated team who will work closely with providers, and alongside the departments operational teams, to support the sectors recovery from Covid 19. The team will be reviewing quality and CQC inspection ratings to support improvements in care provision across the sector and we will continue to work closely with our colleagues within Lancashire and South Cumbria system .

The Daily welfare calls are also reducing as we move to a more sustainable capacity tracker model. Providers are moving to self-input within the national system (NECS) which will enable providers to have more control over this work

The Government have announced a further round of Infection Control Fund (IPC) and Rapid Testing Grant to run from July through to end of September. We await further details of the grant allocations and conditions but anticipate that grant conditions will require detailed usage returns to DHSC to comply with Government requirements.

## **COVID COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS**

Following a recruitment campaign, we now have a network of 265 Community Champions in Blackburn with Darwen who are;

- Helping us to share key messages regularly
- Giving us feedback and insight to inform future communications
- Attending network meetings with local experts, helping us to set key messages for engagement and discussing local issues

Community Champions are a diverse group of people who live and work in Blackburn with Darwen. They are local residents, public sector staff and representatives of voluntary community and faith sector organisations.

We also have three commissioned pieces of work targeting engagement with groups who are particularly vulnerable to the impact of covid;

- Care Network are leading a consortium of providers engaging with adults with learning difficulties and disabilities and autism
- The Strategic Youth Alliance are engaging with young people
- Spring North are leading a consortium of providers engaging with BAME communities

The Covid Community Champions work has already influenced;

- Clearer messaging around the difference between an LFD and a PCR test
- Proposals for a LAMP testing pilot
- Transport solutions for accessing vaccination appointments
- Translated information

You can find out more about Covid Community Champions, and register as a Champion here; <https://www.blackburn.gov.uk/coronavirus/covid-community-champions>

## **SUPPORTING FAMILIES PROGRAMME**

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) Troubled Families Programme was renamed to Supporting Families in April 2021 – this is a welcome change for our strength-based approach for empowering families locally. Blackburn with Darwen (BwD) successfully achieved the programme targets for 2020/21 and the emphasis and focus for this year's programme is on data integration for the Council and with local and regional partners. The BwD programme is now closely aligned with Early Help and Digital Services to enable the commitments for the programme to be met. MHCLG are currently consulting on further improvements to the programme, signalling continuation beyond March 2022.

## **Lancashire Volunteer Partnership (LVP) VOLUNTEER'S CELEBRATION**

As part of Volunteers Week, the Leader of the Council, Mohammed Khan CBE and Mayor of Blackburn with Darwen, Councillor Derek Hardman joined Strategic Director for Adult's and Health, Sayyed Osman to extend thanks to volunteers on behalf of the Council. Volunteers supporting a wide-range of Council services joined a virtual celebration event on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> June. The volunteers also shared their stories via video which were later shared on the large screen outside the Town Hall and the Council's social media channels. More information: <https://theshuttle.org.uk/council-leaders-host-celebration-to-thank-boroughs-incredible-volunteers/>

## **MORE POSITIVE TOGETHER: EMPLOYABILITY SUPPORT**

More Positive Together (MPT) is a Lancashire wide project aiming to support people furthest from employment to help improve their skills and employment prospects through mentoring. The project funded by European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), and has enabled us to provide one-to-one support and engage people who are looking to develop themselves. For more information please visit: [www.blackburn.gov.uk/mpt](http://www.blackburn.gov.uk/mpt). The project is due to end in December 2021 and a bid has been submitted to extend the project up to December 2023.

Additional ESIF funding has been secured, the MPT STEPS project will commence in January 2022 to support residents who have become unemployed due to Covid.

## **SPECIALIST SERVICES**

The Specialist Services Social Work Teams (Safeguarding, Learning Disability, Mental Health and Emergency Duty Team) continue to work persistently, flexibly and creatively, to ensure that our vulnerable residents are supported and safeguarded and that we fulfil our statutory duties.

The Mental Health Service, in particular, is under significant increased demand and therefore, the implementation of a remodel of the mental Health Support Service in the Community Mental Health Team, over the past 9 months, has been timely.

We are now seeing more complexity in the cases that arise. At a system level

## **CCTV UPDATE**

The CCTV control room is in the process of upgrading its software, which will allow the expansion of the existing network. Aside from increasing capacity, set against high demand from local authority and public service partners for further cameras, it will also allow the full use of 4 way high definition cameras. This provides a permanently recorded 360 degree view, improve the detection of crime as each camera location can see in all directions at all times.

The upgrade also includes wider systems supporting the safety and security of staff, and public spaces to include lone worker and staff welfare systems, panic buttons in meeting rooms, reception desks and remote pendants that link to the control room.

Other opportunities of the system will be the potential to integrate with the highways cameras as well as monitoring pollution and traffic congestion changing traffic light sequences and implementing diversion routes via electronic signage. It will also be possible to monitor intruder, fire alarm, building management and access control systems.

Alongside the system upgrade there is now a dedicated police officer based in the control room on a full-time basis. Aside from support in ongoing incidents, the officer will support investigations, continually reviewing CCTV footage and securing the best evidence at the first opportunity, with the aim of further increasing the number of detections.

## **COMMUNITY SAFETY – ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR TEAM**

Over the last 12 months, the council's Anti-social behaviour team have been working with the police and partners to address a significant increase in reported neighbourhood complaints, principally due to reporting of breaches in Covid regulations. In the first quarter of 2021, we have had consecutive monthly reductions on such breaches as the government began lifting restrictions. While Covid related concerns have reduced however, wider concerns around Anti-Social Behaviour have risen at their fastest rate since 2010, with several parts of the borough raising specific and repeated concerns with drug use and paraphernalia and the anti-social use of vehicles. The team are working with the police and partners on both prevention measures and also intervention and enforcement in response, prioritising those areas of greater concern.