

Carers Week 2020

Adult Care Services Q&A sessions – 9/10/11 June

Q1	What does the ACS senior management team see as the changes (positive and negative) coming out from this pandemic?
A	<p>Please see the attached presentation to offer assurances in our approach to work as a result of Covid-19</p> <p>One positive change that ACS will continue is the use of virtual online meetings both internally for staff and where appropriate with service users and carers. This is saving time and travel costs and enables smarter working.</p>
Q2	What is the projected impact on ACS budgets and consequently on service delivery?
A	<p>It is hard to be totally sure as the funding that central government will provide over the course of the year is still not clear. Whilst, sadly, we will not be spending as much as we thought on care homes, we know there is a lot of demand for services that has built up in lockdown. So the financial picture looks uncertain for the moment.</p>
Q3	What lessons have been learnt that will be carried forward?
A	<p>Most of this is covered in the presentation but key elements are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Ability to work in a more flexible way using technology, including as a means of engaging with citizens and carers (albeit not as rich as face-to-face dialogue)- The strength of the voluntary sector in Hertfordshire, and the strength of communities to offer support to those in need- The collaborative approach that has developed between the County and the District Councils.
Q4	People who live in Royston have their NHS services commissioned from health services in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. When we need social care support for example

	dementia services or home care where do we go? What can we expect from Herts County Council Adult Care Services?
A	Although the GPs in Royston are aligned to NHS services in Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire County Council remains responsible for social care for residents of that area. If residents want to discuss their need for social care support they should contact the Adult Care Services department on telephone number 0300 123 4042.
Q5	Many elderly people – often in their mid-80’s – are caring for a spouse at home who has dementia. They often worry what will happen if they pre-decease their spouse, particularly if they are the older partner and have no close relatives. It would be reassuring for them to know what would happen in such circumstances?
A	This is not an uncommon problem as not every carer has close relatives who they are able to rely on in such circumstances. The carer can contact Adult Care Services and ask for a Carer’s Assessment which should include a discussion about contingency and long-term planning. A contingency plan can be set up and lodged with the County Council. Adult Care Services can and do step in when a vulnerable person is left alone and in need of support. The telephone number to call is 0300 123 4042.
Q6	When do you anticipate day services and respite services for adults with a learning disability will re-open?
Q7	And What will providers (HCC/Voluntary /Private) do to encourage families to resume using these services?
A	We hope to re-open day and respite services for adults with a learning disability as soon as possible. However this will have to be done in a phased way to make sure that we comply with current restrictions and social distancing guidance and we cannot as yet give any definite timescale. There will be full risk assessments undertaken to inform our decisions. We will prioritise people whom are assess as in the greatest need of access to these services. Our day service teams are in touch with the people who use our

	centres and they are visiting and working with clients where this is considered necessary and appropriate. We recognise that some families will not want their relative to return to services for fear of infection and the social workers will speak to them individually and look at whether there are any alternative ways of supporting the person and their carer.
Q8	<p>My relative enjoys support from a Day Centre (3 days per week) and the Learning Disability support team at a Housing Association where she lives in a flat. Both areas of support would benefit from a clearer sharing of information between providers to achieve outcomes within a coordinated care plan.</p> <p>How could Adult Care Services support County-funded providers to establish and maintain effective links to ensure stronger liaison?</p>
A	Agree that it makes absolutely good sense to share information in this way for the benefit of the client and their family carers. It may be that the developing practice of virtual (online) meetings will allow all interested parties to attend care plan review meetings and contribute and share information as appropriate. We would encourage this approach.
Q9	<p>I have a Mentee whose mother prefers to be spoken to in Gujarati, and is resisting her daughter's request to reinstate the care package granted to her prior to the pandemic, quoting language difficulties.</p> <p>Can you offer any advice on how the care package can be adapted to meet her mother's needs?</p>
A	This is a very reasonable request and the carer and her mother should speak to the social worker who agreed the care package to identify a domiciliary care agency which can provide a worker with the right language skills. Direct payments can also be used as this might enable the family to employ a worker of their choice who, again, has the right language skills.
Q10	Families continue to experience problems with home care where workers turn up at times convenient to their service and not when they are needed i.e. late in the morning to help with personal care, or crazy-early to help put to bed. An added problem is that when carers are able to find an appropriate service, e.g. a male carer to

	<p>bathe an elderly gentleman the hourly costs are often higher than the level that ACS pays.</p> <p>One carer suggested that she would be willing to reduce the number of daily calls in order to be able to meet the costs of the higher hourly rate – would this be possible?</p>
A	<p>Capacity in the care provider market is the cause of this problem – Adult Care Services have worked with providers to improve the hourly rate and terms and conditions of care workers to support recruitment but this is ongoing work.</p> <p>Direct payments can be used flexibly on occasions and the carer should speak to the social worker who agreed the care package to discuss whether this would be possible.</p>
Q11	<p>Will carers who have stopped paid care workers coming into their property because of the virus be able to reinstate them when they feel safe or the pandemic is deemed over?</p>
A	<p>Carers will be able to ask for care to restart. At this stage, we can't guarantee that care providers will have exactly the same time slots available, but we will work with them to meet the needs.</p>
Q12	<p>Many families have relatives in residential and nursing home care and they have not been able to visit them since the lock down was introduced in March. This is causing carers huge feelings of guilt and anxiety which is badly impacting on their emotional well-being. What help is available to enable them to manage these feelings? (The same question applies to applies to those carers with relatives in supported living accommodation.)</p>
A	<p>Families should speak with the care providers about what options are available to them to support contact during this time e.g do they have IPADS or laptops to download a virtual chat app. If families still have concerns then they can speak with the social care locality team via the contact centre on 0300 123 4042</p> <p>Our contract with Carers in Herts includes general support. The HPFT helpline on 01438 843322 can direct carers to more specialised support if required.</p>
Q13	<p>When will family members be able to visit their loved ones in care</p>

	homes and have close contact where all the residents and staff have tested negative for coronavirus?
A	This would be a government decision as well as one taken by each home; we will support care homes to put in place any guidelines. Public Health have recently published guidance for local homes who are considering allowing visitors to return.
Q14	Why have some residents in care homes been tested but no results sent back?
A	If the tests were carried out by the NHS Health Protection Team they can be contacted on 0300 303 8537 option 1.
Q15	Will care home residents and staff who have previously been tested negative for coronavirus, receive regular Covid-19 tests, perhaps weekly to ensure there are no further outbreaks?
A	There have been recent announcements by Government indicating that regular testing will be available to care home residents and staff as of Monday 06 July. Staff will be tested weekly and residents tested every 28 days.
Q16	Carers continue to report that that they are not put in touch with local Hertfordshire Dementia post-diagnostic and community services when their relative has received their diagnosis of Dementia from an NHS Trust outside of Hertfordshire. This issue has been raised frequently in the past – what is being done to ensure that people are given timely information about the local support available in such circumstances? Should this include the services and support provided via the EMDASS pathway?
A	The post diagnostic support is available to all Herts residents. There are process in place for this, but anyone who feels they have been missed can contact the Alzheimers Society directly on 01707 378365.
Q17	Carers are stating that the person with Dementia has not been able to access other health services during lockdown to treat other health conditions such as bladder and bowel treatment. When will these services be back operating and will people who have had appointments cancelled be the priority?

A	<p>The NHS Trusts are gradually bringing different services back on line at different times. If delays are causing concerns please contact 111 or your GP.</p> <p>We are currently in the process of restoring services including our bladder and bowel service. All services are risk assessing patients waiting for appointments and we are ensuring that services are restored in order of risk, i.e. those that are the highest risk first. We are offering, where appropriate, virtual appointments and are in the process of re-instating face to face clinics for those patients that cannot be managed virtually.</p>
Q18	<p>I care for my husband who was diagnosed with Alzheimer's 5 years ago. I cared for him without help for the first 4 years but he has now become incontinent and has been referred to the Bowel and Bladder Service. We have been waiting weeks for the assessment and in the meantime we are having to buy the incontinence products which are £11.60 a pack and only last 2 days. So I am paying for his daycare and now his pants which are making things very tight financially. Why do we have to be assessed when he has Alzheimer's. This is what I want to know and why does it take 4 to 5 months for this to happen?</p>
A	<p>We can take this up with the NHS bowel and bladder service, it would be useful to know if this is in West Herts or East Herts</p> <p>PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) may be able to support with receiving further information or making a complaint if you wish to take this further. PALS can be contacted on 0800 011 6113 (local call 01707 388164). Alternately you can email us at: pals.hchs@nhs.net</p>
Q19	<p>Many carers have been confined at home with their relative who has Dementia from mid-March. This has meant that they have not been able to attend any community groups – the lack of stimulation is causing a deterioration in many with Dementia and the lack of socialisation is difficult and isolating for the carers. What plans are there to re-open the Hertswise and the many other local groups and when is this likely to happen?</p>
A	<p>Providers will be asked to plan for various levels of restrictions, we want to get people meeting again but safely. Hertswise have already made group sessions such as chair based exercise</p>

	available via Zoom and are exploring how to begin socially distanced meetings in person.
Q20	Very little support has been provided to carers who are looking after a spouse with dementia at home to enable them to get out for a walk or to have some time to themselves. This has been particularly difficult as day services and groups are not available. One carer told us that they get one agency visit per week for an hour or so to allow them to go for a walk. What would you consider to be a reasonable level of support in such situations – depending of course on whether the carer is ready to accept it?
A	Support packages are individually assessed through carer assessments. These vary with factors such as the impact on the carer, so it is not possible to give blanket statements. Carers who are in the process of arranging a carer assessment can access up to 18 hours free breaks through Turning Point.
Q21	When will respite in residential care homes be offered again to relieve carers looking after a frail elderly spouse at home?
A	Respite has continued to be offered throughout Covid 19. Most care homes require a Covid swab prior to admission at the present time. We can help to have this organised for you. Please speak to your social work team if you need respite on 0300 123 4042. Capacity has been affected due to the pandemic. We are however committed to ensure we support you as carers and we recognise the need for you to have breaks.
Q22	What is being done to ensure that young people with Disabilities can move into suitable independent accommodation (not supported living) with the right care, in a timely manner, without the barriers that adult services are consistently putting in the way? What support is available from adult services to find suitable accommodation as we have not had any so far?
A	In order to support individuals, it is important to fully understand their situation. If there are issues with individual cases it is best to contact the team manager of the area your son/daughter or loved on resides in to talk these through to find ways of offering support and advice. HCC are embarking on a new strategic approach to providing accommodation options across Hertfordshire for people

	with disabilities, including offers which are not in the traditional sense of Residential or Supported Living.
Q23	I asked to put my parent's home care package on hold until the current lock down restrictions were lifted as she was very worried about care workers bringing the COVID-19 virus into her home. I was told by social services that this is not possible, the package would have to be cancelled and she would have to be reassessed when we wanted the support to start again. Why do I have to re-arrange another assessment? Why can't the care package be put on hold for a vulnerable (Dementia/Alzeimers) until they are classed as safe from Covid-19?
A	<p>Care home packages that have been placed on hold during Covid will be restarted, however you may not receive the same care worker that you previously had.</p> <p>Contact should have been made with the social work team prior to care packages being suspended. This is so that we could work with you to ensure that you had alternative arrangements in place whilst care was on hold, to support you.</p> <p>Conversations are required prior to restarting care to ensure that we provide the right support going forward.</p> <p>We recognise that some people will have been without care for some time, and their needs may have changed. These conversations may be over the phone or face to face dependent on your circumstances. Please contact your social care team if you wish to start receiving care again.</p> <p>Care home placements will remain open, with the option to return, and you will not be charged for any time that your loved one isn't at their placement.</p>
Q24	<p>How can we get a breakdown of costs for care services delivered to the client (service user)?</p> <p>It is managed by Adult Services, provided by Care Provider and invoiced by Serco. We have tried and have been pushed to Serco for a breakdown, but understandably they do not have any detail.</p>
A	For long term residential/respite care, we advise service users that

	<p>if they require a breakdown of what care is contained within the weekly bed rate, to contact the care home. They should be able to stipulate how the fees are calculated. A portion will be for 'board and rent' and the rest for actual care provided.</p> <p>With non-residential (or homecare), a breakdown of how many minutes/hours the carers visit for and what tasks they undertake can be found in the care plan</p>
Q25	How can we get a statement of account - payments/balance so we can submit to Office of the Public Guardian?
A	HCC finance can provide a breakdown of how much we have paid a care home/agency and for what periods as this can be obtained from their payments system. Finance can also give you a breakdown of how client contribution is calculated and what invoices have been presented to the service user and what is outstanding. Please speak to your social work team if you need assistance with this.
Q26	What is the process to communicate any missed sessions by the care provider, and how can we ensure that we have not been charged?
A	Care providers use electronic monitoring systems which report where there have been missed calls. We use this information to inform care payments what should be charged. You should not be charged for any missed visits. If you think you have been charged please contact care payments team, who invoice you for your care, to clarify.
Q27	When a social worker leaves Adult Services, why is it not communicated to the service user by email as to who is to be contacted?
A	We are sorry to hear that this has not been happening. If a social worker leaves, you should receive a letter from the worker advising you that they are leaving, and who to contact should you have any future concerns. We will follow this up across all Adult Care Services teams to ensure that this is effectively communicated via a letter or email as a priority.
Q28	Can the service user get access to records held by Adult Services

	<p>based on the Freedom of Information Act? Thursday</p>
A	<p>You can find advice and information of how to access records online on Hertfordshire's website;</p> <p>https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/freedom-of-information-and-council-data/access-the-information-we-hold-about-you/access-the-information-we-hold-about-you.aspx</p> <p>Please also contact your social work team if you need some support to do this.</p>
Q29	<p>How is the service level provided by the care provider audited in the home? We have not seen evidence of this, nor the outcome, which means the service delivered is variable and sometimes to the detriment of the client if the client does not have full mental capacity these shortfalls are likely to be missed. Thursday</p>
A	<p>For all of our regulated services we have a quality monitoring framework called PAMMS. This involves assessments of the provider to ensure that they are providing good quality care. We also work closely with the CQC to understand and monitor the quality of services provided in Hertfordshire.</p> <p>We have quality monitoring officers who also audit randomised packages, and we would contact families, service users who have capacity and social care practitioners to help inform these audits.</p> <p>The quality and outcomes of individual packages are also monitored through the Annual Review Process. If you have concerns about the services your loved one is receiving please contact your social care team who may arrange for an unscheduled review.</p> <p>If you have concerns about service delivery, please speak to your social work team or you can register concerns via the care concerns email at;</p> <p>CareConcerns@hertfordshire.gov.uk</p>
Q30	<p>Safeguarding of the client (service user) is an important, sensitive and delicate fact-finding process and provides protection where needed. Those that involved in any particular Safeguarding Case</p>

	should have sight of the documentation, recommendations and support. Does this happen?
A	<p>This may depend on individual circumstances and whether a person has consented to their information being shared. Some people may not want their carer to know sensitive information about them. We will support as much as possible to share information and support individuals to share how best to keep them safe and manage risks.</p> <p>If the service user doesn't want us to share information, we wouldn't be able to share this with you. We ask this specific question of individuals as part of our safeguarding process. If a person lacks capacity then we would identify the right person to support the individual, and this may be you as a carer or a paid advocate.</p> <p>If you have attended any meetings as part of the safeguarding process the minutes of this meeting should be shared, and this will include the outcomes and recommendations of what will happen next.</p> <p>If you have been directly involved in supporting your loved one in a safeguarding investigation but haven't received feedback please contact your social work team who will be able to assist you.</p>

Other questions which came up during the sessions:

Q1	Will there be a purpose for the refurbished care homes post lockdown?
A	We will be working with commissioning to consider how Fairways and Nevetts may be used, however their purpose for now is to support our Covid strategy, including if there are future peaks.
Q2	Carers contingency plans:
A	You can access a carers contingency plan on line at: https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/adult-social-

	<p>services/carers/planning-for-the-future</p> <p>During the Coronavirus pandemic we are offering a carer's contingency form to download and keep, or return to us at contact@hertfordshire.gov.uk to be held on your care record. Completing the form will give you reassurance that if you become unwell or there is an emergency and you are unavailable, all of the information needed to arrange care can be quickly accessed. You can ask for support to complete this form by calling us on 0300 123 4042.</p>
Q3	What are the figures of BAME in Hertfordshire? And could you include figures for people with diabetes if possible as they are not always shielded by letter but are very susceptible if they become infected?
A	At the moment we still only have national level breakdown of deaths by ethnicity.
Q4	Will the ACS 3 Year Plan be co-produced and how will it integrate with the ICS and cross-border services?
A	<p>The plan is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • we are doing a questionnaire which is just going live • we are then going to interview people– with lived experience, carers, professionals – probably 20 or so – to get more richness to the feedback • Then in September time we will run some co-production events to determine what we want to see in the next three years, this will include sessions at Co-Production Boards • Draft plan produced for December Panel, with the final for March 2021 panel
Q5	Are you able to support charities and groups to develop their plans to re-open? There must be some similar issues.
A	This is a good idea. Commissioners are holding workshops with providers to share best practice.
Q6	What has been the impact/figures for the disabled people?
A	Sadly, 8 people supported by Adult Disability Services have died

	and 508 older people. (as at 11th June 2020)
Q7	Can I ask about Care Home communication to carers, it has been difficult for both sides. And on the 'Keeping In Touch calls it appears that some care homes are using technology (Skype etc) to help families keep in touch ... some didn't do that. Could it be encouraged
A	Work is ongoing with care providers to develop different ways of facilitating communications with carers and their loved ones, whilst retaining tight infection control. We believe further guidance to care settings is coming out soon from government on this.
Q8	Do the care homes that have 'stand-alone wings' can they be used for carer breaks (respite)?
A	Potentially yes, we are talking to bigger care homes about this as well as separate wings for individuals with a positive Covid-19 diagnosis.
Q9	As a full-time Carer am I allowed to request PPE from Adult Services?
A	Like everyone else family carers need to try and buy their own PPE. You may be able to claim back the costs through the system, possibly via a direct payment in most cases. In an interim/emergency Carers in Herts do have some stock they can provide for free. ACS keep them stocked up. If you are a paid carer (either by Direct Payments or as an employee of an organisation) you can call the Provider Hub for support.
Q10	Subject access request? Can we have some information on this please?
A	Information on subject access requests can be found here: https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/freedom-of-information-and-council-data/access-the-information-we-hold-about-you/access-the-information-we-hold-about-you.aspx

Q11	What will be the co-production structure within the Integrated Care System?
A	This is still to be determined. THE ICS has just appointed its new Chief Officer and management team and so some of this will depend on their approach.
Q12	Where ACS or provider staff are proactively contacting carers, are they taking steps to promote uptake of carers assessments?
A	Yes – they have been encouraged to do so across their different interactions.
Q13	10,000+ volunteers, many of whom are hoping to go back to work but many may not be able or may not work or may still have some time to volunteer. Will there be the resources to activate them ongoing?
A	The Volunteer and People Assistance Cell has been co-ordinating the volunteering response to COVID and is developing proposals for how to maintain this resource moving forwards.
Q14	What support is available for carers dealing with learning disability and challenging behaviour. If group day opportunities are not available would there be any one to one support to provide support?
A	Some services have adapted their approach during this time and have been providing telephone and virtual support. If someone would like to seek advice regarding support available and they have concerns about a person then they should be directed to the social care locality team via the contact centre 0300 123 4042
Q15	When will services be going in and delivering carers breaks within the home? Dementia carers are really needing this service?
A	Services are working to government guidelines and some services have already opened again whilst some have adjusted the way they delivery their service. This is down to the individual care provider. If a person has concerns and would like to discuss additional support in the short term, they can contact the social

	care locality team via the contact centre 0300 123 4042.
Q16	Can care homes be encouraged and supported to put these innovative ideas in place i.e. the drive through that one care home is doing can things be shared with other providers?
A	This is a good idea. We will talk to Herts Care Providers Association about how to share best practice across the sector.
Q17	Are you applying the same support to residential homes for people with Learning Disability etc?
A	Yes the same support applies to homes supporting those with a Learning Disability. They can contact our provider hub if they require advice.