

# Care Dorset Shareholder Committee

## 5 December 2023

### Dorset Council Commissioner Update

#### For Review and Consultation

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr J Somper, Adult Social Care, Health and Housing

**Executive Director:** V Broadhurst, Executive Director of People - Adults

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#### **Brief Summary:**

Having now passed its first anniversary of operation, Care Dorset is strengthening its position as a significant part of the Council's portfolio of commissioned services. It has also begun to transform some key parts of the social care offer for the residents of Dorset. This update summarises some of the recent progress in delivering the priorities for Care Dorset's transformation. There are no significant issues of concern raised in the report.

#### **Recommendation:**

1. For Committee to note the continued progress made in development of the relationship between Commissioners and Care Dorset.
2. For Committee to note the priority areas being addressed and plans in place to further develop Care Dorset priorities in line with Dorset Council 'A Better Life' Commissioning Strategies.

#### **Reason for Recommendation:**

Care Dorset is a key part of delivering the Council's 'Commissioning for A Better Life' strategies, and for improving the quality and sustainability of the care and support delivered to adults in Dorset.

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This report provides an update on work with Care Dorset since the last Shareholder Report.
- 1.2 Regular contract management meetings continue to take place. As outlined previously, an important theme has been data and reporting, and this has developed considerably through good joint working between the Council's Business Intelligence team and Care Dorset colleagues. Council commissioners have access to the dashboard showing key performance metrics, and data from these has been used to demonstrate the impact of reablement and other interventions.
- 1.3 On two occasions, Council commissioners and Care Dorset leadership team have held extended joint planning discussions, the focus of which has been on ensuring alignment between the commissioning strategies that the Council agreed in February and the emerging business plans of Care Dorset. It has also provided opportunity to share information on the challenges in the future delivery of good and sustainable support to adults in Dorset, as well as to consider how Care Dorset's service developments are operating and the future plans.
- 1.4 Agreement has now been reached on outstanding matters relating to the Business Transfer Agreement from Tricuro, and this is now being finalised.

## **2. Property and assets**

- 2.1 Condition surveys have now been completed for the Care Dorset estate, and there is an ongoing dialogue between Care Dorset, commissioners and the Council's Asset Management team about the way forward.

## **3. Contract and service specification development**

- 3.1 Whilst the service continues to operate under a 'grace period' in which the old service specifications continue to apply, both parties have agreed to work towards ensuring that new specifications are in place to govern activity from April 2024 onwards. This allows for a proper consideration of the different strands of transformation underway, and a more robust forward-view on both Care Dorset's future plans, and the wider system developments that commissioners can support to make sure that Care Dorset has the best chance for success.
- 3.2 The development of the strategy and business plan for Care Dorset, and the development of new specifications for services by commissioners, are being

worked on collaboratively with a view to ensuring that they come together around February, as a staging post towards the new financial year. This has been greatly facilitated by strong working relationships between the leadership teams of Care Dorset and the Council's adult services, which are noted at regular points through this update.

#### **4. Finance**

- 4.1 Based on positive progress on making the anticipated savings, attention is now turning to developing the mix of KPIs and future efficiency targets which support the business plan and, from a commissioning perspective, align to the benefits expected from transformation of the services. As deployment of Care Dorset's capacity is improved, commissioners are working to understand the positive impact on unit costs and on cost-effectiveness, which is all part of the work needed on the future contract and specification.
- 4.2 Commissioners have noted the extent to which some of the improvement in service delivery has been supported by improved recruitment and retention of staff, and improvements in measures such as sickness absence.

#### **5. Day services**

- 5.1 The Council set out a high-level view on a new model of day opportunities in its commissioning strategies in February 2023. The model seeks to prioritise flexibility, variety, links to local community activity, and choice and control. Provision of high quality building-based support for those with complex needs remains a core priority.
- 5.2 It was clear, however, that more work needed to be done to understand what people wanted from day opportunities, what was getting in the way, and how a new model could work for them. This includes people whose voices were not as loudly heard in the 2021 consultation, as well as the need to go back to those groups that did take part and follow up on their post-pandemic views. Amongst the groups that we want to hear more from are young people coming through to adulthood, older people, and people who are may need more structured support in future, but are currently living independently and being supported naturally by the communities around them.
- 5.3 We have been working closely with Care Dorset to ensure that they are part of these conversations, together with the people who draw on their support. A survey has been live for some weeks, and runs through to December. A number of conversations, focus groups, and thematic discussions are now being set up so that we have a good range of information to inform a way forward. Building

on the positive developments in Care Dorset's reablement services, we have started working through what an 'enabling' focus for day opportunities could mean and how this could shape the model.

- 5.4 It is envisaged that this work will continue into the new year, and we will be able to bring forward a new model for delivering day opportunities in the new financial year. Of course, Care Dorset will be a significant part of that future model, just as they are part of shaping it with us and our other partners in the sector. A joint plan on how we might implement any such model is envisaged for a next phase of the work.

## **6. Residential care**

- 6.1 Residential bed occupancy had seen a significant increase since the transfer of services, and this continues to be the case, standing at levels that are at the upper end of industry expectations. This has particularly been aided by the development of flexi-beds to support Discharge-to-Assess. Care Dorset's reformed approach to centralised referrals has greatly improved the working relationship with the Council's brokerage teams.
- 6.2 Discussions with commissioners and operational leads are positive with respect to the services that can be provided and how they can be improved and developed. Commissioners are very aware that Care Dorset is constrained in its ability to serve a more complex demographic due to the specification, age and condition of the properties it occupies.
- 6.3 As part of the developing thinking for a new reablement facility, a high-level appraisal has been undertaken of the potential for developing all of the sites and facilities, and is subject to current discussions with Care Dorset about the best way to approach the long-term development and investment planning for these sites, to meet the best of current standards and the projected future demand for care.
- 6.4 As part of the specification setting for 2024, work is underway to resolve outstanding anomalies in the contract information passed over from Tricuro, which includes how the residential contract is allocated across the Care Dorset estate, and the resulting unit costs.

## **7. Reablement services: bedded support and community support**

- 7.1 Seen from a commissioning perspective, this continues to be the most impactful development of the Care Dorset offer over this past year. 30 beds are now operating across the Care Dorset residential estate, and with the acquisition

and opening of Shottsford House, Blandford (now renamed Castleman Plus) there is the opportunity to use this as a test-bed to demonstrate the positive system-wide impact of a good, proactive bedded reablement offer.

- 7.2 Similarly, we continue to see positive development in the efficacy of community reablement services, and commissioners are very welcoming of seeing data that demonstrates the impact of these services in terms of care hours reduced or admissions avoided. We have agreed to work on this data further, and to develop a dataflow that can demonstrate not only care avoided or hours reduced from the point of referral to Care Dorset, but also reductions in long-term care previously being delivered to people before their point of crisis and hospital admission. The proactive commitment to partnership and system working demonstrated by the new service management has transformed how reablement contributes to management of system pressures.
- 7.3 It remains a long-term strategic goal to ensure that reablement is more routinely available as a community intervention, rather than being so overwhelmingly focused on the point of hospital discharge. The Council's work on its operational services redesign describes the potential benefits of a greater role for reablement services in the community as part of a more deeply embedded preventive offer, and Care Dorset are well-placed in the conversations to pick up on this opportunity.
- 7.4 It will be essential that we work across the system, with partners, to resolve the issue of therapeutic input and leadership into reablement services, so that they can take the next step in their effectiveness at returning people to their own home. Commissioners are committed to supporting Care Dorset in this planning, and the system-wide conversations that will be needed in the context of a scarce therapy workforce locally.

## **8. Extra care housing**

- 8.1 Work has been undertaken on the specification for the new care and support services provided into the St Martin's extra care housing scheme at Gillingham. Again, Care Dorset's positive commitment has been welcomed.
- 8.2 Work is continuing to finalise care and support costings. In the face of unforeseen delays to building works, we are currently agreeing on how we manage between us the interim staffing costs that have been incurred.

## **9. Supported living**

- 9.1 Care Dorset and commissioners have worked together well on closing a service which was not well utilised, and their other services remain at capacity. The wider programmes for optimisation of learning disability support, which are looking at technology, provider-led reviews and other interventions, have been strongly supported by Care Dorset.

## **10. Next Steps**

- 10.1 As reported previously, we will continue to keep shareholder committee abreast of developments in the commissioning partnership between the Council and Care Dorset. It is likely that the next report to the Committee will be on the basis of the newly emerging service specifications that accompany the contract.