



DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL

To: Members of Devon County Council

County Hall
Exeter
EX2 4QD

25 November 2020

AGENDA

9. Cabinet Member Reports (Pages 1 - 34)

Reports from Cabinet Members.

Report of the Cabinet Member

Policy, Corporate, Resources and Asset Management

Introduction

I have been asked to report as follows for Full Council on 3 December 2020:

1. By Councillor Hannaford on the option for all eligible electors in the Devon County Council area to vote entirely by post in the next set of local elections in 2021 because of the Covid-19 pandemic'
2. By Councillor Hannaford on the spending review announcements by the chancellor, and how this will affect Devon County Council.

Response

1. Eligible Electors and Postal Voting

As Members will be aware, earlier in 2020 and due to the COVID pandemic the Government legislated to postpone all planned elections and referenda until 6 May 2021.

Since then the Government has confirmed that there will be no further primary legislation around elections which rules out:

All out postal voting;
Changes to polling hours; and
Allowing by-elections or referenda to take place before 6 May 2021

The Government does however recognise that the polls in 2021 will present new challenges and that electoral administrators will have to make changes.

A recent letter from Chloe Smith MP Minister of State for the Constitution and Devolution said it was not necessary for significant changes such as imposing an all-postal vote or changing polling days or times (which would require primary legislation). The Government remains of the view that all-postal voting increases fraud risks, and removes the choice from voters who may wish to cast their vote in person.

The Government are however considering a potential smaller change to legislation to support electors with absent voting, an update on which should be provided in due course, as well as considering other ways of ensuring voter participation which includes a digital application process for postal and proxy voting. The Government has however confirmed it will be considering secondary legislation to make COVID-19 related restrictions (i.e. quarantining and self-isolation) an eligibility for emergency proxy voting, as is already the case in Scotland.

Agenda Item 9.

Currently the Government are issuing resources for Local Authorities to use to help voters understand their voting options for the May 2021 polls. With the relevant measures in place, polling stations will be safe places to vote, but voters will also need to be made aware of their absent voting options including what they need to do to apply for an absent vote in time for the polls.

Due to the changing nature of the impact and response to coronavirus nationally and locally, it will be important that communication plans are flexible and can be adapted to respond to changing circumstances throughout the period leading up to the polls.

2. Spending Review 2020

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, presented the Spending Review to the House of Commons on the 26th October. Following last year's one-year spending review, this year's was planned to be a full 3 year Spending Review but it is not a surprise that due to the economic and financial impact of the Pandemic this was reduced to one year.

The Spending Review provided more detail than some have in the past, but the Council's funding allocations will not be known until next week at the earliest when the Provisional Settlement is due to be announced. The size of some grant funding streams may not be known until the new calendar year.

The key messages from SR2020 that will impact next year's budget are set out below:

- Core Spending Power to increase by 4%. This is a headline average and does not mean that our funding will increase by this amount as the figure includes Council Tax;
- A new Social Care grant of £300 millions nationally has been announced. This is to support both Children's and Adults Social Care;
- The Council Tax increase that will trigger the need for a referendum has been announced as 2%;
- The option to set an Adult Social Care Precept of up to 3% has been announced. If the full percentage is not used in 2021/22 there is an option to carry forward the unused amount to 2022/23;
- It has been confirmed that the current Social Care grants will continue next year;
- A public sector pay freeze has been announced except for those earning less than £24,000 per annum who will receive an increase of at least £250. The pay freeze does not apply to front-line NHS staff;
- The National Living Wage will increase by 2.2% next year to £8.91 per hour;
- A grant of £670 million nationally has been announced to offset some of the impact the Pandemic is having on the Council Tax Base for next year;
- A Council Tax Income Guarantee Scheme has been announced that will compensate authorities for 75% of irrecoverable losses in the current year;
- The current New Homes Bonus scheme will continue next year;
- The Fairer Funding Review, 75% Business Rate Retention and the Business Rates Reset have been delayed;
- Covid funding of £1.55 billions nationally has been announced for next year; along with
- The continuation of the 75% Covid Sales Fees and Charges compensation scheme into the first quarter of 2021/22.

Agenda Item 9.

As part of the Spending Review the following grants were also announced. These grants, with the possible exception of Cyber security do not form part of the settlement and are expected to be specific ring-fenced grants. Some of the grants are for revenue purposes and some capital with a mixture of allocation by formula and grant funds that authorities are able to bid for.

- Cyber Security modernisation £16 millions;
- Test & Trace £15 billions;
- Personal Protective Equipment £2.1 billions;
- Rough Sleepers £254 millions;
- Domestic Abuse £98 millions;
- Troubled Families £165 millions;
- School Transport Capacity £70 millions;
- Secure Children's Homes £24 millions;
- Social Housing Decarbonisation £60 millions;
- Roads Maintenance & upgrades £1.7 billions;
- Cycling £257 millions;
- High Street Regeneration £621 millions; and
- Levelling up for local infrastructure £4 billions.

What this means for Devon

We won't know for sure what this means for Devon until the Provisional Settlement – which should be week commencing 14th December, but the Spending Review announcements should help us to set a balanced budget

John Hart

Cabinet Member

Policy, Corporate, Resources and Asset Management

**Report of the Cabinet Member for
Community, Public Health, Transportation and Environmental Services**

Introduction

I have been asked to report to Council by Members as follows:

1. by Councillor Hannaford on the current status of varroa destructor mite infections on Devon's honeybees, including what work is being done to combat and contain it working with key partners, bee keepers, regulators, and landscape managers and whether there was any new evidence in Devon to suggest a cross contamination into other wild bee species locally?
2. by Councillor Hannaford on the latest trends, figures, rates and convictions regarding domestic violence and sexual abuse in Devon. Specifically, to include places of safety capacity, prevention work, and child centred practice. Also, with the current DVSA sector drivers from the pandemic, mental health and acute social issues, and the economic downturn, what modelling work is being done to try and scope out future service pressures?
3. by Councillor Hannaford on the rollout of the scheme to support vulnerable children and families in Devon
4. by Councillor Hannaford on Covid-19 developments to include pressing issues around vaccinations, secondary school infections, infection rates, extended or additional lockdowns, and the potential repercussions of a Christmas relaxation of restrictions
5. by Councillor Atkinson on the NAO October report on Improving local bus services in England outside London – to include its recommendations and their relevance to Devon and what the Council proposes to do to take these forward.

Response

1. Varroa destructor mite

Current status of the Varroa destructor mite infections on Devon's honey bees

Varroa destructor, a global pest of the European honey bee (*Apis mellifera*), was first reported in the UK, in Devon, in 1992 and is now present in every known honey bee colony across the county. This is having a costly impact on bee keeping (apiculture). If left untreated, Varroa infection will lead to the loss of a honey bee colony within 2-3 yearsⁱⁱ. The mites are also exhibiting widespread resistance to the pyrethroids – the insecticides that were initially used to treat infected honey bee colonies.

What work is being done to combat and contain it working with key partners, beekeepers, regulator and landscape managers?

Over 90% of beekeepers in the UK control Varroa mite in accordance with the 'managing Varroa' guide provided by BeeBaseii. This consists of mechanical treatment of the colony at low numbers of infestation, swapping to chemical control with the introduction of Varroa medicines when mite populations surpass 1,000 to reduce further resistance to treatment in the Varroa mite. Between 2009 and 2020 the National Beekeepers Union has hosted 674 training events in the South West, with 18,632 participants learning how to manage bee pests and diseases. In addition, beekeepers in Devon are encouraged to join Beebase and one of the 11 local beekeeping associations, where they receive updates into the latest pest control including Varroa. Through these associations beekeepers from Devon are now participating in university led research, including the 'ReViVe' project, to better understand resistance to Varroa and winter colony losses and 'B4: Bringing Black Bees Back' project in collaboration with the University of Plymouth. The latter is attempting to use native 'British black' honey bee subspecies (*Apis mellifera mellifera*), locally adapted to Devon and, potentially, with resistance to Varroa mite, in apiculture across the county. There is some evidence that bees in Devon are developing resistance to the Varroa mite through a new 'hygienic' behaviour.

The impact of Varroa mites on the health of a honey bee colony can be exacerbated by other stressors, such as pesticides, poor weather and limited food resources. Devon County Councils grass cutting and 'Special Verge' policies attempt to reduce these stressors by providing food sources along roads throughout the county. The Devon Local Nature Partnership has also promoted effort to increase the diversity of food sources for pollinators, with 15 projects organised by over 30 partners, while the 'Get Devon Buzzing Campaign' raised awareness and facilitated people across Devon to take positive conservation action .

Is there any new evidence in Devon to suggest a cross contamination into other wild bee species locally?

In the UK the Varroa mite is a parasite exclusively of honey bees and, therefore, there is no cross contamination between domesticated and wild bee species. However, recent work by the University of Exeter has shown the Varroa mite, when present in a hive, increases the prevalence of deformed wing virus (DWV) in the honey bees, which increases the chance of this virus being spread to wild bumblebee species visiting the same flowers . By intervening when Varroa mites are first found in a hive, the chance of this virus infecting bumblebees is reduced.

References:

¹ Thompson, H., Ball, R., Brown, M., & Bew, M. (2003). Varroa destructor resistance to pyrethroid treatments in the United Kingdom. *Bulletin of Insectology*, 56, 175-184.

¹ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2020) Healthy Bee Plan Review

¹Animal and Plant Health Agency (2020) Managing Varroa

¹Exeter DBKA (2017) High mite levels in colonies

¹ Waite, R., Brown, M., & Thompson, H. (2003). Hygienic behaviour in honey bees in the UK: a preliminary study. *Bee World*, 84(1), 19-26.

¹ Martin, S. J., Hawkins, G. P., Brettell, L. E., Reece, N., Correia-Oliveira, M. E., & Allsopp, M. H. (2019). Varroa destructor reproduction and cell re-capping in mite-resistant *Apis mellifera* populations. *Apidologie*, 1-13.

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¹ <https://www.naturaldevon.org.uk/devons-natural-environment/pollinators/>

¹ Ramsey, S.D., Ochoa, R., Bauchan, G., Gulbranson, C., Mowery, J.D., Cohen, A., et al. (2019). *Varroa destructor* feeds primarily on honey bee fat body tissue and not hemolymph. *PNAS*, 116, 1792–1801.

¹ Manley, R., Temperton, B., Doyle, T., Gates, D., Hedges, S., Boots, M., & Wilfert, L. (2019). Knock-on community impacts of a novel vector: spillover of emerging DWV-B from *Varroa*-infested honey bees to wild bumblebees. *Ecology letters*, 22(8), 1306-1315.

¹ University of Exeter (2019) Honey bee mite raises bumblebee virus risk

https://www.exeter.ac.uk/news/featurednews/title_720410_en.html

2. Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse in Devon

Devon's response to domestic violence and abuse spans many agencies. The response is overseen by the Safer Devon Partnership and is the Partnership's top priority. Sexual violence is often present within domestic abuse but also occurs in other contexts. Sexual violence is also one of the Safer Devon Partnership's priorities. This answer focuses on domestic abuse as the trends and responses are different to sexual violence.

The Community Safety Strategic Assessment brings together key information to assess crime, disorder and safety issues across Devon, including both domestic abuse and sexual violence. The Assessment for 2019-20 shows a 3% increase in incidents recorded by police linked to domestic abuse in Devon (11,000 incidents, 16.8 incidents per 1,000 population). However, the Office for National Statistics notes that police figures in recent years have been greatly affected by better reporting and increased willingness of victims to seek support. The Crime Survey for England and Wales suggests that there has been little change in the prevalence of domestic abuse in recent years. In the most recent quarter (July-September 2020) there has been small increase in Domestic Abuse crimes recorded compared to the same period in the previous year, but a small decrease in the number of domestic abuse incidents.

It is certainly the case that there has been a steady increase in referrals and requests for specialist support for victims of domestic abuse in Devon in recent years, and a sharp increase since the Spring COVID-19 lockdown. The specialist domestic abuse support service for Devon commissioned by Devon County Council and led by Splitz Support Service saw a 60% increase in calls in April 2020 compared to April 2019. The demand has since eased but is still around 50% higher than the previous year. An increase in the complexity of cases has intensified the pressure caused by the increase in volume of demand. This includes mental health and drug and alcohol issues being worsened by lockdown pressures, child contact issues, perpetrators moving back into the family home and other factors. The Council has responded to these pressures by allocating an additional £250k of funding from the COVID-19 emergency funding received from government. This will enable the service to increase capacity in its helpdesk and recruit additional IDVAs (specialist advisers).

There has also been a substantial increase in the number of professionals seeking advice on how to support families experiencing domestic abuse. Calls to the

Professionals' Helpline increased from 1-2 per week to 60 per week during the Spring lockdown. This was largely from professionals supporting families with children. Temporary additional funding was allocated by the Safer Devon Partnership to enable the creation of a professional consultation team to provide training for teams and individual case consultations.

Two thirds of cases receiving specialist domestic abuse support include children. The needs of children as witnesses and victims of domestic abuse are being addressed in a number of ways. The Operation Encompass initiative – that alerts a child's school the morning after the child was present at a police-attended domestic abuse incident – has seen a 38% annual increase in the number of calls to schools – over 500 calls per month on average. The initiative enables schools to provide appropriate support for children at the earliest possible opportunity, dependent upon the needs and wishes of the child.

The Council has allocated £150k of COVID-19 emergency funding to strengthen the ability of the multi-agency Early Help locality teams to provide direct support to families experiencing domestic abuse where appropriate. Additional funds have also been allocated to enable locality teams to commission support for children and families to recover from the impact of abuse. This includes Pattern Changing, Parent-Child Recovery and counselling for young people. The funding is for a fixed term, pending evaluation of impact in April 2021.

The associations between intimate partner violence and child abuse are now well known. Significant attention is given to breaking cycles of abuse and our services are careful to not overlook the needs of children when much of the focus is on the needs of the parents. Our Early help and statutory children services practice a child centred approach. Children are listened to so that their perspectives and experiences are understood because we know that their experiences living with domestic abuse differ, and whilst all children need to be safe, their need for support and help varies. Our involvement ranges from child centred preventative planning, child focused protection planning, and alternative permanency planning where concerted efforts are made to move children to extended family members or connected people (where it's safe to do so) so that their strong sense of identity is maintained.

Several initiatives are under way to prevent domestic abuse by identifying and intervening early, and reducing repeat victimisation and perpetration. Behaviour Change advisers working within the Integrated Offender Management programme have achieved very positive results. The approach helps perpetrators to recognise the impact of their behaviour, take responsibility for it and change it. A pilot in the Exeter area showed a dramatic reduction in repeat incidents of abuse. The programme has been extended to North and South Devon. The Behaviour Change approach is also being trialled with young people who show harmful behaviour in their relationships. Again, this initiative relies on fixed term funding.

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for Devon and Cornwall has recently been allocated over £400k by the Ministry of Justice to support a range of initiatives to reduce or prevent perpetration of domestic abuse. In Devon, the "Active Bystander Communities" initiative developed by Exeter University will be embedded by creating a group of trainers who can cascade the approach to local

organisations and communities. The Active Bystander approach gives members of the community confidence and techniques to speak up and challenge attitudes and behaviours that lead to domestic abuse.

Devon's Vision for Ending Domestic and Sexual Violence abuse includes a clear focus on increasing the ability of front line professionals across the public sector to identify and respond to signs of abuse: "making domestic abuse everyone's business". Devon is testing and evaluating the innovative CRAFT framework for identifying, assessing and working with relationship conflict, violence and abuse. CRAFT builds skills and confidence of practitioners who are already supporting other family needs including Children's Centres, Family Intervention Team and Together Drug and Alcohol Service. This work is also being extended to the Perinatal Mental Health Team. The CRAFT programme is benefiting from additional (but still fixed term) funding from the OPCC/Ministry of Justice.

Victims of domestic abuse are often frequent users of health services, which opens valuable opportunities to identify abuse and offer support. Devon has been trialling the nationally-recognised IRIS approach, which embeds skills and capacity in GP practices to identify domestic and sexual abuse experienced by patients and offer support. The Devon trial covers only 30 GP practices with funding to March 2021. The Devon Clinical Commissioning Group is considering a business case for embedding the IRIS approach in all practices on a continuing basis.

The availability of safe accommodation for victims of domestic abuse and their children is affected by the severe shortage of affordable accommodation of all kinds. Devon's district councils, within their duties to prevent homelessness, can provide temporary accommodation in some situations. Fixed term government funding has enabled the creation of three dedicated Places of Safety (2-bedroom flats) and two further sites are being discussed with a local housing association. The refuge run by North Devon Against Domestic Abuse has eight rooms (25 bed places). It is also important to enable victims and their children to remain safely in their own homes where this is appropriate, excluding the perpetrator. This approach is not always possible but it can keep victims and their children close to their existing support networks, limiting trauma from separation and giving better opportunities for recovery.

There are no accepted or reliable models linking factors such as socio-economic conditions and mental health to domestic abuse. Even before the unprecedented conditions created by the pandemic and lockdown measures, it was recognised that while the role of specialist support services is important, there are many missed opportunities to recognise domestic abuse and intervene early. The testimony of victims that underpinned the creation of Devon's Vision highlighted that real change for them is often dependent on the person experiencing violence and abuse having the opportunity to develop a positive and long-term relationship with one trusted professional who can navigate the system on his/her behalf. This support can come from anyone; a children's centre worker, a teacher or an employer.

At the moment, the Council has no specific statutory duty in the area of domestic abuse support services. The Domestic Abuse Bill currently before Parliament will introduce a new duty on the Council to provide domestic abuse support for victims and their children who are living in safe accommodation. To carry out this duty, the

Council will be carrying out a needs assessment, cooperating with district councils and creating a new Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, leading to the creation and delivery of a strategy to provide that support. The duty will bring welcome new recurrent funding from government for those specific types of support. However it should be noted that most victims of domestic abuse seek and receive support when they are living in their communities. The broad range of initiatives listed above in prevention, action on perpetration, early intervention and recovery all take place within communities and have been made possible in Devon only through fixed term funding from a variety of local and national sources. Continuing to provide such services on a sustainable basis is a challenge to all members of the Safer Devon Partnership.

3. Support for Vulnerable Children and Families in Devon

Throughout the COVID-19 response the Council has worked and provided significant investment in alleviating the impacts of financial hardship on the most vulnerable and particularly on children and families.

The Council welcomes the announcements in November from Government to provide funding for the Winter Grant Fund of £170M, which equates to an allocation of up to £2.042M for DCC. This announcement also included increased funding from April 2021 to the Holiday Activities and Food Programme (£220M) and an uplift in Early Start Vouchers to £4.25.

The Winter Grant fund is targeted to support 'vulnerable families with children and other vulnerable households, particularly affected by the pandemic' and whilst there is some flexibility within the funding, 80% of any allocation must be spent on food with the remainder of funding available to support household costs relating to energy (heating, cooking, lighting), water bills (including sewerage) and other essentials. Any funds must be spent by the end of March 2021.

The Council, as with much of its decisions around grant allocation, is seeking not only to develop a comprehensive and timely response, but also as far as possible to create sustainability and some legacy from this funding and as a result will decided on three key areas of investment.

Firstly, alongside Team Devon colleagues, we will align funding and arrangements with the Council's previous £1.7M investment in hardship funding to District Councils to provide vital support to families impacted by economic pressures. The Council recognises these vital 'front doors' for local people to access this hardship support alongside support and advice around housing, benefits and debt. The Council will work to ensure support regarding bills and debt relating to energy and water is channelled through District helplines and in turn with the range of support organisations locally and nationally.

Secondly, the Council has commissioned Devon Community Foundation to facilitate a rapid piece of work to develop a series of Food Networks across Devon, with an ambition to develop or align to, at least one network per District area, before Christmas.

Networks, which will include community kitchens, foodbanks, charities, cafes and pubs will initially be tasked to facilitate a food response from now until Easter 2021. This will be through a single point of contact/lead organisation in each District to support the co-ordination of food response, particularly to vulnerable families with children, at this time. This work will be supported by funding of up to £400k to provide vital funding for organisations providing food to those in need.

In the longer term it is hoped that these networks will continue to develop and sustain in order to support the Council in its wider ambitions around food, particularly in relation to sustainability, local production, good nutrition and health, and food security. In addition, these networks should provide better co-ordination for future food response requirements, for example with any wider COVID-19 or economic pressures in the coming months or in response to emergency needs.

We have seen throughout this year an overwhelming response from communities and voluntary and community sector organisations and an investment in these emerging networks and the great organisations within them, will provide timely and much needed funding and co-ordination.

Thirdly, the Council is committed to providing a universal offer to those families currently relying on term time food within schools. Therefore, we will make available a voucher for each of the 15,000 children eligible and accessing free school meals across Devon. This will equate to an allocation of £30 per child over the Christmas holidays. We will extend this offer to YP within tertiary colleges across Devon and to those eligible children within grant-maintained pre-school settings.

Vouchers, which in the main will be made available digitally to parents, will be able to be converted to spend within major supermarkets of their choice including Tesco; Morrisons; Sainsburys; ASDA; M&S; Waitrose. Arrangements will be in place for those parents without e-mail or unable to utilise the vouchers digitally.

Food networks will be developing some facilities for families to exchange supermarket vouchers, for example with a local foodbank, should the choice and access for supermarkets not meet any urgent need. In addition, the Council will provide a basic food box facility should families be unable to utilise a voucher and require urgent support.

In addition to the direct and universal issuing of vouchers, the Council will make a significant number of vouchers or equivalent, available to Early Help Teams, Children's Centres, Food Networks and District Councils to ensure that vulnerable families, who may fall outside eligibility for free school meals, are also supported over the coming weeks.

Members will recognise that this significant response, is also a significant logistical undertaking, which has been rapidly brought together following government announcements. Arrangements remain fluid though I would hope that vouchers will be delivered to most parents by 11 December.

4. Covid-19 Developments

Background

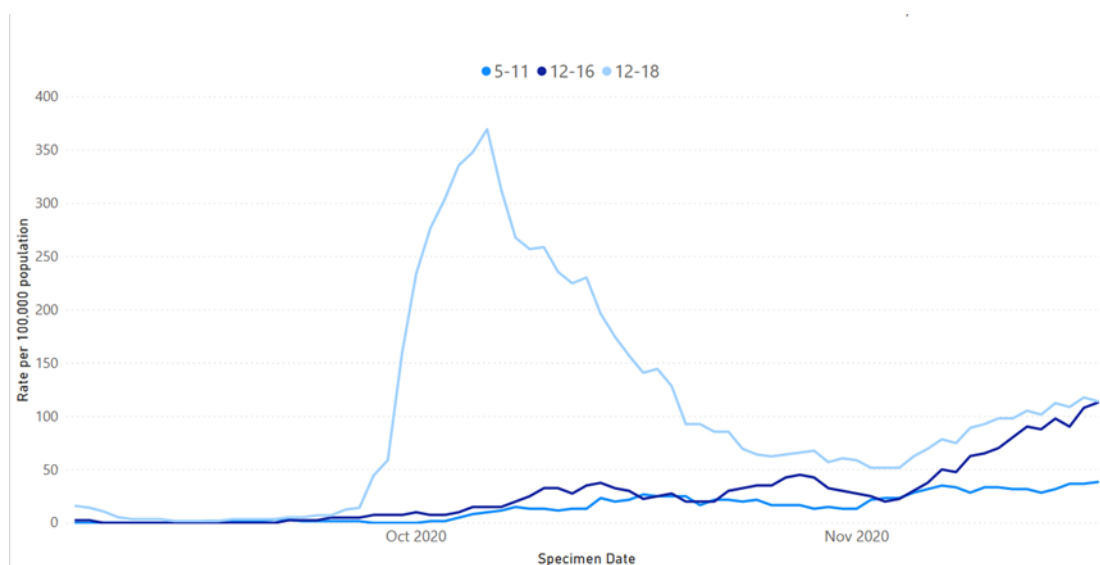
Covid 19 rates across Devon have increased steadily since October 2020. Recent data for Devon shows some early signs of overall rates reducing. The reduction in cases is also reflected nationally and is as a result of the national lockdown restrictions. To date, rates across Devon have been below the national average with the exception of Exeter which was due to an outbreak within the University in October. This was brought under control swiftly through coordinated efforts from stakeholders such as PHE, Public Health Devon, University, Police and Exeter City Council. Latest data published on the 23rd November suggest that the rate of COVID infections for Devon and England is 110.5 and 251.5 respectively per 100,000 population. While growth has been observed in most age groups, rates across Devon are currently highest in the 20 to 39 age group. These increases are mainly due to increases in the numbers of cases observed within workplaces and educational settings.

Care Homes

To date, we have 91 known situations in care homes across Devon which equate to around 180 confirmed cases. These situations are being managed through Adult Social Care with support from Public Health Devon and PHE. Situations in care homes remain open for 28 before they are closed provided no new cases are reported. Around two thirds of our care homes with open situations have not reported a case within the last 7 days. Devon has the fourth lowest Care Home rate among local authorities in the South West. Latest data suggests that Devon has a Care Home rate of 299 per 100,000 Care Home beds a rate below the South West average (708 per 100,000 Care Home Beds).

COVID 19 Pupils of statutory School age update.

Weekly rate of positive cases in school aged children in Devon



Numbers of positive COVID cases in pupils of secondary school age have risen steadily since start October with a dip seen around half term and a sharper rise seen in recent weeks. We are seeing encouraging signs that this may now be stabilising.

Rates of infections in primary school aged pupils has remained steady at a relatively low rate of 38.49 per 100,000 for past few weeks having seen a rise in early November.

The peak seen in the 12-18 age band of 370 per 100,000 was driven by cases in the university population in Exeter seen in late September early Oct when students returned.

This trend in Devon mirrors that seen nationally in school aged children but we are seeing a rise in cases a few weeks behind other parts of the country. Rates remain relatively low (113/114 per 100,000) compared to other areas of the country. Devon continues to have a higher percentage of pupils attending school than the national figures across all categories, 10% higher than the national average for secondary schools.

In the past few weeks there have been some changes made to the way support is offered to schools by the Department for Education Helpline and the Public Health England Health Protection Team (PHE SW HPT). Public Health Devon are working closely with PHE SW and in collaboration with the DCC Education team to ensure schools in Devon are receiving the support they need to make the decisions required of them in a timely manner.

Attendance local figures are for 23rd November, National are latest available of 19th November

Devon continues to have a higher percentage of pupils attending school than the national figures across all categories. 10% higher than the national average for secondary schools.

- Devon 90.1 % of pupils attending (Nationally 83%).
- Students with an Educational Health Care Plan: Devon rate 87% (Nationally 77%)
- Pupils with social workers attendance rate: 88% (Nationally 77%)
- Primary Schools: Devon rate 96% (Nationally 87%)
- Secondary Schools: Devon rate 89% (Nationally 78%)
- Special schools: Devon rate 90% (Nationally 69% approximately)
- Early years: 84.8% of those expected (No direct national comparator but estimated at 90%)

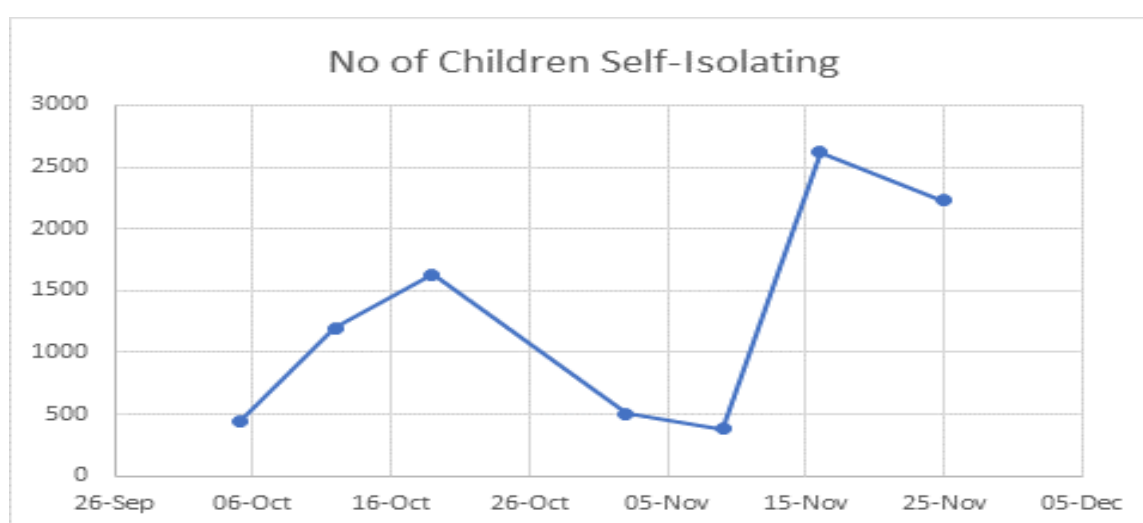
COVID 19 positive cases in school aged children for 23rd November

- **54 schools (17 Secondary, 37 primary)** currently have positive cases where staff, pupils, year groups or bubbles are self-isolating.
- On the 25th November there were approximately **2231 (1251 secondary; 980 primary)** pupil absences, due to positive COVID 19 cases, in Devon.

[88 pupils as positive COVID 19 cases, 2143 self-isolating as a close contact of a positive case]

- **472 teachers** were unable to attend on the 24th November for COVID related reasons.

Number of children of school age self -isolating in Devon



Testing

Testing capacity for people with COVID-19 symptoms (Pillar 2) has increased in Devon over recent weeks with tests in Devon having doubled compared to August levels with approximately 16,500 Pillar 2 tests being undertaken on a weekly basis in Devon.

Positivity rates, or the proportion of Covid-19 tests that yield a positive result are currently 5% for the South West and 10% for England.

Some testing of asymptomatic people has also commenced in Devon. Regular Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing has commenced in the acute trusts within Devon and a care home visitor testing pilot has commenced in a small number of care homes. Exeter University are also offering Lateral Flow Device testing for students wishing to return home for Christmas.

There will be a national mass testing programme which will see a central supply of LFD tests to various settings to enable the undertaking of regular testing of staff. A number of pilots are underway but is likely to include settings including, visiting professionals to care homes, all visitors to care homes, prisons, extra care and

supported living. In addition to the national programme all Directors of Public Health will receive an allocation of LFD tests for local determination. Work is currently underway to identify priority groups which are not included within the national programme for which we can utilise the flexible allocation.

Mass vaccination

The government has signed agreements with seven separate vaccine developers. At present there are reported positive research results from several vaccine providers which are at various stages of the licencing process. These include

- Pfizer/BioNTech (40 million doses)
- Moderna (5million doses)
- Oxford/AstraZeneca (100 million doses)

Detailed planning is underway in Devon for COVID-19 Mass Vaccination so a local vaccination programme can commence as soon as the vaccines are authorised for us. The planning builds on national and local expertise and track record in immunisation programmes, to ensure a COVID-19 vaccine does not impact on local vital services. Local Authority representatives are closely involved, including from public health, adult social care and emergency planning.

Though we do not yet know which candidate vaccines will be approved first, or when, we expect roll out to focus in the first instance on frontline health and social care staff, care home residents and staff, and people aged over 80 in line with the current recommendations from the Joint Commission for Vaccination and Immunisation.

Two Mass Vaccination site have been identified by the CCG in addition to more local primary care network sites all of which will be supplemented by the delivery of vaccines in vulnerable settings by local primary care teams. DCC is in active in discussions to ensure that our health and social care staff can be vaccinated.

There is a comprehensive workforce plan to ensure sufficient staff can safely support the programme, and not negatively impact other services. We expect existing vaccinators, newly recruited and trained personnel, and volunteers to all have a role to play.

Tier System

The announcement on the 26th November placed Devon County Council in Tier 2 (high). Government ministers make the decision on which tier local authorities are placed in based on the following criteria:

- case detection rate (in all age groups and, in particular, among the over 60s)
- how quickly case rates are rising or falling
- positivity in the general population
- pressure on the NHS – including current and projected (3 to 4 weeks out) NHS capacity – including admissions, general/acute/ICU bed occupancy, staff absences

- local context and exceptional circumstances such as a local but contained outbreak

Reviews of the tiering allocation will take place every 14 days.

Christmas

The Government has confirmed the Christmas coronavirus restrictions between 23rd and 27th December. This will allow three households to form a Christmas bubble.

5. Improving local bus services

The National Audit Office (NAO) report of October 2020 examines the effectiveness of the Government's support for buses, and the extent to which the enablers are in place for local authorities and operators to realise the long-term, sustained improvement that the Department for Transport (DfT) now intends.

The report:

- explains what the data shows on bus use, provision and performance over time and across local authorities in England. It also sets out roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for delivering and improving bus services;
- examines the effectiveness of the revenue funding framework for buses;
- examines the effectiveness of government's current approach to improving bus services; and
- assesses the issues government needs to address to achieve its aims for the future of buses in England.

The report does not examine the value for money of the DfT's emergency COVID-19 interventions. Although the issues highlighted pre-date the COVID-19 pandemic, the NAO considers that they remain and have been brought into sharper relief by its effects. It does not examine voluntary and community transport providers.

Bus services have been declining across England for 70 years and the decline continued following deregulation in 1986, with only a few local authorities managing to buck the trend. However, government recognises that affordable bus services have public value, and funds around 24% of bus operators' revenue income. They have chosen to deliver public bus services via a deregulated market model, and devolves decisions about supporting services to local authorities, who best understand local needs.

The DfT is not accountable for delivering bus services, but it has national policy responsibility. It is preparing to commit significant new funding to bus services and to lead a national strategy for improvement against a background of considerable uncertainty. The DfT collects data on buses and can show it has funded valuable improvements, but to date it has not sought to demonstrate how its actions have contributed to supporting optimal value for money across the bus system. If it is to work with and through others at central and local level, make informed choices about funding, and be able to adjust its plans to ensure it meets its objectives, it will need greater clarity on what it wants to achieve and how it will know when it has done so.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the DfT has come together with local authorities and operators, intervening rapidly to target the weakest areas and keep buses running, which offers learning for the future.

The report goes on to make a number of recommendations:

1. **a clear, consistent vision of the future of bus travel**, that encourages and supports local authorities to make long-term plans for their own local needs.
2. **a detailed, transparent delivery plan with clear objectives, responsibilities and accountabilities for the DfT and others.**
3. **good quality data and measures of success.**
4. **an active role in supporting local authorities to access evidence and experience to support improvement.** The DfT should work with MHCLG, local government, transport planning professional groups and operators to make it easy for local transport planners to share experience, resources, evidence and advice, and where necessary build local capacity to influence and improve bus services;
5. **the amount and form of funding, for both local authorities and operators, that is necessary to achieve the objectives of the bus strategy.**

For Devon there are no immediate implications and we await details of the Government's strategy for buses together with any long-term funding intentions, now due early in the New Year. Our minds are currently focussed on efforts to sustain the bus network during and in the immediate aftermath of the COVID pandemic.

Until recently, Devon was one of the authority areas bucking the trend of decline in bus patronage. In 2019/2020 we were recording a 28% growth since 2002/2003.

We attribute this to successful joint, informal partnership working with our major commercial bus company (Stagecoach) as well as other small operators. In spite of previous pressure on finances, the County Council support for local bus services has continued to maintain good geographical coverage and using developer funding to bring about significant improvements. Our achievements include:

- successfully kick-started service developments to achieve either commercial viability or sustainability within reasonable support levels.
- all bus services are now low-floor accessible.
- we have supported all our companies to acquire contactless payment facilities.
- we maintain a supply of public information both on-line and (until interrupted by the pandemic) through traditional printed material which continues to be well received.

We support the report's fifth recommendation on funding. It states that the DfT has already committed to providing a long-term funding model and that it should work with MHCLG, HM Treasury and local government as part of wider local government funding discussions, to ensure that the various elements of bus funding available to combine effectively to support the objectives set out in the strategy. This should include:

- reform of the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) to ensure incentives are aligned with government's objectives;

- and work to understand the actual costs to local authorities of funding statutory concessions and the effect on budgets for bus improvement.

On BSOG, Devon has successfully utilized and profiled the expenditure of its devolved funding for tendered services to maintain stability and consistency of provision. We would favour devolvement of at least a proportion of commercial service BSOG and have conveyed this view to Government.

Regarding the funding of statutory concessionary travel, we have consistently pointed out the serious shortfall in funding. The Government states concessionary travel funding as support for the bus industry rather than what it is; a subsidy for the eligible passenger travelling and not paying a fare.

Before the pandemic, we were about to embark on improvements to the bus network, utilizing new government revenue funding, and ran a positive and encouraging public consultation. The pandemic has put those plans on hold and the bus network is now confronting potential long-term and permanent changes to travel patterns arising from altered working arrangements and shopping habits, a slow recovery in public confidence and the general effects of economic downturn. The Devon network is strong and well run but it is unlikely to emerge without changes and in this context the support from Government needs to be as clear, consistent and long-term as the NAO report advocates.

Councillor Roger Croad

Cabinet Member for Community, Public Health, Transportation and Environmental Services

**Report of the Cabinet Member
Children's Services and Schools**

I have been asked to report as follows for Full Council on 3 December 2020:

1. By Councillor Hannaford on the ongoing additional costs to Devon's schools from the Covid 19 pandemic, and what work is being done to secure additional funding.

Response

I would first like to put on public record my thanks for the way Devon's headteachers, teachers and school and college staff have risen to the challenge of educating our children throughout this pandemic.

As well as helping children catch up with their learning after the first lockdown, they've been confronted with the huge task of making schools as safe as possible for children to return. And they've been juggling with cases of Covid in both staff and children and organising for bubbles and, in some cases, whole year groups to self-isolate.

On top of that, they've had to reorganise timetables in some cases and arrange for supply cover.

That places a tremendous pressure on them and obviously adds to their costs.

In the last academic year, schools were offered extra financial help from the Government to compensate for the extra costs of Covid. So far that support has not been repeated in this academic year.

I have already written to the Education Secretary calling for better compensation for schools for Covid costs:

Williamson letter - attached appendix 1

As you know I am chairman of f40, and the organisation has also written a very detailed letter to Mr Williamson:

f40 letter – attached appendix 2

In addition I have met with officials responsible for finance at the DfE. They have told us they are looking at the pressures and are intending to put a plan together.

Dawn Stabb also has raised this issue in her regular meetings with the DfE regional directorate. We are both lobbying as hard as we can.

I was asked about the specific costs of Covid for schools but obviously this varies enormously in a county like Devon where we have primaries with just 20 or 30 pupils up to those getting on for 600 children and secondaries with below 1,000 up to some of the largest in the country with well over 2,000.

So, these figures are for an urban primary with just over 200 pupils. Their extra costs up to the end of November include £6,902 for cleaners, cleaning materials and masks and hand gel and a loss of revenue of £7,920 from lettings income.

James McInnes

Cabinet Member

Children's Services and Schools

Councillor James McInnes
Cabinet Member for Children Services and Schools



Secretary of State for Education
Gavin Williamson

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20 October 2020

Dear Mr Williamson,

I am writing to you as deputy leader of Devon County Council and the Cabinet Member responsible for schools as well as the National Chairman of f40.

I want to highlight the difficulties that many schools in Devon, and nationally, are having in trying to balance their budgets because of the extra costs of dealing with the Covid-19 crisis.

Schools in Devon have done a remarkable job since the start of the pandemic in providing an education for our children. First for the children of key workers and vulnerable children, later for all pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 in our primaries and then for Years 10 and 12 in our secondaries.

Since the start of the new academic year in September all of our schools have been open to all pupils. Despite a number of schools having to send home some year groups or bubbles to self-isolate, our latest figures show a 93 percent attendance rate.

So our schools and my hard-pressed education officers have done everything that has been asked of them, particularly in giving parents the reassurances on safety they needed to send their children back to the classroom in the first place.

Apart from the human cost, this has also come at a financial cost. Schools have been scrupulous in ensuring their premises have been kept clean and stocked with hand sanitiser and other essentials, but this has meant a considerable increase in their bills for cleaning and caretaking.

The latest instruction to provide tailored home learning for pupils having to self-isolate has greatly increased the pressure on teachers who are finding they have to do this on top of their classroom teaching duties.

And when teachers are required to self-isolate, their heads are having to find extra funds to pay for supply teachers to take up the strain.

In Devon all this is compounded by the historic under-funding of our schools compared to the national average.

I am only too aware of the huge obstacles the Government has had to overcome during this unprecedented crisis and the vast amount of money that continues to be spent in supporting the people of this country.

But I would point out that our children – and so their parents – have paid a very high price for protecting the health of this nation and particularly our older and more vulnerable people. The time is now right to re-balance that situation.

I would like to emphasise that I welcome the extra funding that has been made available to education and your Government's commitment to levelling up school finance in areas like Devon. However, much of the additional funds that schools have received have been dissipated by the costs of Covid in hiring supply teachers, ensuring virtual learning is in place, organising one-to-one learning for self-isolating pupils and ever more rigorous cleaning and caretaking.

The National Association of Head Teachers says that in just the first few weeks of term, schools have spent an average of £8,017 on enhanced cleaning supplies, personal protective equipment, hand-washing stations and other measures.

No one is disputing that the costs of this pandemic will not have to be paid for in time but I would urge you, as Education Secretary, to ensure our schools have the resources they need now to continue to provide a Covid-safe education for their pupils. I believe education has to be one of our top priorities for extra spending so we can restore the terrible loss of learning that our children have suffered as a result of this crisis.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James McInnes', written in a cursive style.

James McInnes



October 20, 2020

Continuing impact of Covid-19 on school and education funding

Dear Mr Foot/Mr Goldman

I hope you and your colleagues at the Department for Education continue to be well through these difficult times.

Since I last wrote to you in August, the f40 group has been in dialogue with our members, both from local authorities and schools, about the continuing impact of Covid-19.

While f40 would very much welcome an opportunity to meet with you remotely later in autumn, we felt it would be useful to share now some of the feedback we have received.

We appreciate you are under increased pressure, but feel a grassroots perspective is of benefit.

f40 believes the impact on schools should be continually monitored, and the criteria for claiming back extra expenses regularly reviewed.

While we welcomed the additional funding announced for schools last year, much of it is being swallowed up by the increases to teachers' pay and pensions, and now Covid-19.

In real terms, schools are much worse off than they were five years ago and simply cannot meet the additional demands placed on them now due to the pandemic.

1. Additional teaching costs

Since schools returned in September, one of the greatest challenges for headteachers has been ensuring that their schools have sufficient teaching staff in place every day.

As the number of Covid cases rises, more and more teachers are having to isolate if they have possible symptoms, or if they have been in contact with someone who has tested positive.

Some teachers are also having to stay home to look after their own children who are isolating.

The impact on schools is enormous.

The squeeze on education budgets in recent years has led many schools to reduce the number of teaching staff to the bare minimum. That means they now have no spare capacity when teachers are absent.

During the pandemic, schools are having to increasingly rely on supply teachers to provide cover. This is exacerbated when Covid tests are not quickly or locally available.

If teachers could be tested immediately, those that receive a negative result could return to the classroom, rather than having to spend unnecessary time away from school.

Such is the extent of the issue, many schools have already spent their annual supply teaching budget. As time goes on and costs continue to be incurred, schools are having to consider the

trade-off between opening in full and the threat that may pose to the future financial sustainability of the school.

A number of headteachers have considered using their school budgets to buy testing kits themselves – in order to get teachers with a negative result back in the classroom quickly. They were eager to know whether it would be an appropriate use of budget, claiming it was the only way they could keep costs down and schools open during particularly trying times.

We do not believe schools should have to use their teaching budget to pay for Covid tests but agree with them that it would be a better use of their budget if it saved them substantial sums on supply teachers.

Suggestion: f40 believes Government should pay the additional staffing costs of schools, where they have arisen due to the pandemic.

Suggestion: Priority should be given to schools and teachers during the testing process, similar to that given to health care workers, to ensure teachers can return to the classroom at the earliest opportunity.

Suggestion: Additional testing kits should be supplied to schools on a rolling programme.

2. Additional teaching resources

Schools, particularly primary schools, are having to spend more on teaching resources.

Social distancing measures mean children can no longer sit together and share learning resources and equipment, as in the past. This is a direct additional cost to schools caused by the pandemic.

Suggestion: Schools be allowed to claim back extra costs for learning resources brought about by Covid-19.

3. Extraordinary additional costs

The current guidelines around reclaiming additional expenses have been in place since the spring, and we believe they are now too narrow for the current situation. The range and breadth of additional costs for schools is constantly expanding as they navigate their way through the pandemic.

Schools need ongoing assistance with generic extra costs, such as deep cleaning and the displaying of information signs, however, a range of additional 'other' costs are also emerging.

While we encourage schools to make savings where they can, we believe no school should be worse off because of Covid-19.

Some schools may also have unique costs to them, which we believe should be included in the criteria for claiming back expenses.

For example, special educational needs schools are spending substantial sums on PPE, such as aprons, masks, and gloves. This is considered essential as some children with additional needs are prone to spitting, biting, and licking, increasing risk of infection, but it is costly.

Examples of emerging additional extra costs include:

- Additional water usage due to extra hand washing
- More frequent emptying of cesspits due to the increase in water usage
- PPE
- Remote learning platforms

- Extra toilet blocks
- Additional lunch/dining room equipment to aid social distancing (trays, cutlery, crockery)

Suggestion: f40 believes allowance should be made for schools to recoup 'other' extra expenses that are not already included on the claims form, and which may be specific to their situation. At the end of the financial year(s), it should become clear if they need to pay back funds.

4. Winter costs

Schools are expecting their heating costs to rise this winter as a direct result of the pandemic.

In order to reduce the risk of Covid infections passing between pupils and teachers, schools have been advised to keep buildings well ventilated by keeping windows open wherever possible.

This hasn't posed a problem during the warmer months, but now autumn is here, schools are having to use their heating systems more frequently, and increase the temperature, to compensate for the open windows.

Suggestion: Schools should be allowed to claim for additional heating costs by submitting this year's heating bill along with a comparative bill from the same period last year.

5. Loss of income

Many schools are facing financial hardship because their income streams continue to be frozen. These could be after school clubs, or the hiring out of sports and community facilities.

In many cases, while the income is no longer coming in, the costs associated with them, such as staff and leasing costs, are continuing.

Some schools have had no choice but to wind up certain activities, which is a loss to their community and has also incurred associated redundancy costs.

Suggestion: We believe the DfE should support schools who have lost income by agreeing to subsidise a percentage of it – for example, funding 75% of lost income. This would be in line with the approach taken with local authorities.

6. Extra learning support

Many local authorities are reporting a sharp spike in EHCP applications since September.

f40 does not believe EHCPs are the right solution for all children and should only be used when long-term special educational needs are identified.

We feel they should not be applied to children who have fallen behind due to coronavirus, or who have anxieties relating to the pandemic.

However, greater funding for early intervention programmes should be available to restore emotional well-being and provide additional support to children who need it due to the impact of Covid.

While the catch-up grant goes somewhere towards this, it will not be sufficient to meet the demand of every school. Also, schools may have to use the catch-up grant to ease wider funding pressures, rather than targeting it at specific pupil need.

By putting additional funding into learning support now, Government will save money in the long-term on EHCPs and special educational needs.

Local authorities can play a key role in bringing together large numbers of schools, along with other key services, such as social care.

Suggestion: Additional early intervention funding, over and above the £1bn catch-up grant, should be provided to ensure additional emotional well-being and learning support can be provided – reducing the likelihood of children needing EHCPs and to help children progress.

7. School transport

Local authorities and schools welcomed the additional funding to assist with school transport in September and have done incredibly well to ensure children get to and from school according to the new safety measures.

While we welcome the new injection of funds for school transport announced last week, £27m, we fear this will not be enough to meet demand, especially in large rural counties.

For example, in Devon we had a shortfall in extra school transport costs of £100,000 between the start of September and the October half-term. That is additional spending that Devon County Council cannot afford.

We need a commitment to fund the extra school transport required until the Covid restrictions end – whenever that might be.

Suggestion: f40 believes Government should make a long-term commitment to fund all additional extra school transport costs brought about by the pandemic until social distancing measures and restrictions are removed.

8. School census

The school census is taking place this month and concerns have been raised around the accuracy of the census in relation to the funding requirements of each school next year.

In recent weeks there has been a noticeable rise in Elective Home Education (EHE), with one council claiming a 500% rise in applications, from 70 during this period last year to 350 now.

We believe this is a direct result of the pandemic.

Children who are being educated at home will not be included in the school census, and thus not included in school budget forecasts for next year.

However, a large number of these children may return to the school system later this academic year – creating a funding shortage for their schools.

When these children return, they may also require greater learning support and may qualify for Free School Meals, yet their school will not receive funding to cover either purely because they missed the census.

Suggestion: f40 believes the Department for Education should prepare for discrepancies in the census due to the high number of children taken out of schools due to Elective Home Education. We believe schools should be paid an additional sum to cater for the likelihood of children being brought back into the system next year, and to enable them to provide extra learning support where needed.

9. SEND

Special Educational Needs continues to be a major concern for f40, with the needs of pupils outstripping available budgets, and EHCP applications continuing to rise.

The situation is only going to get worse unless the High Needs system is overhauled, with less reliance on EHCPs and greater emphasis on school inclusion.

Many councils have growing deficit SEND budgets and these will continue to increase unless action is taken now to deal with the High Needs crisis.

We urge Government to resume its review of SEND as soon as possible, and report back with recommendations at the earliest opportunity.

Schools need support systems, guidance and additional funding to enable them to be flexible in the way they work, which can enable them to be properly inclusive of pupils with SEND.

And local authorities need additional funding to settle the huge deficit budgets they currently have, which is running close to £20m in some councils.

Suggestion: The review into SEND be resumed as soon as possible.

Suggestion: The SEND system be overhauled, with less reliance on EHCPs and greater emphasis on inclusion at mainstream schools. Schools should be given greater funding, guidance and support in order to provide the right level of care and education to pupils with High Needs.

Suggestion: Local authorities should be given additional funding to pay off the deficit SEND budgets they have accrued.

Conclusion

Once again, thank you for taking the time to read some of the feedback we have received from our members.

If you would like to discuss it in more detail, don't hesitate to contact me, or f40 Secretary Karen Westcott, and we will be happy to arrange something.

Kind regards



James McInnes
Chairman
f40
07961 275814

cc. Karen Westcott
07545 210067

Report of the Cabinet Member Adult Social Care and Health Services

Introduction

I have been asked to report as follows for Full Council on 3 December 2020:

1. By Councillor Hannaford on the progress and outcomes of the new care home testing pilot scheme in Devon.
2. By Councillor Hannaford as follows: Devon County Council and Exeter City Council have worked successfully together to develop Edwards House an Extra Care Housing facility in Exeter. The needs assessment identified a further requirement for another extra care housing scheme for the West of Exeter.
3. By Councillor Connett on the work being undertaken to support Carers and Young Carers across Devon since March 2020 and over the coming months to the end of March 2021. I would like the briefing to cover the number of carers the council is assisting and identify any increases/decreases in requests for support so far this financial year.

Response

1. Care Home Testing Pilot Scheme

This is a small-scale pilot involving eight care homes in Devon and we are one of three Local Authorities (also Hampshire and Cornwall) who were selected, based on low prevalence rates.

The aim of the pilot is to examine the role of how testing of visitors, alongside other existing infection prevention/control measures, maximises safety. It will run for four weeks from 16 November to 13 December 2020. Homes received training through online webinars on 12/13th November before commencing the pilot on 16th November.

The testing will use a combination of new rapid-results tests as well as the tests already in use:

- weekly swab testing of regular visitors, using existing PCR swab testing technology
- new Lateral Flow Devices (LFD) tests which are taken before visitors enter the home with results available within 15 to 30 minutes.

As LFDs are new technology, any positive tests will be confirmed with a PCR test.

Feedback from the homes is collected through weekly online sessions, facilitated by the DHSC. The first one was held on 19th November.

Feedback from the homes has been mainly positive, reporting that the process is simple to follow and meaningful contact whilst wearing full PPE is appreciated. Relatives and residents have been very emotional with the pilot bringing hope and a glimpse of the new normal.

30 visitors had been tested as of 20th November. One visitor tested positive and went home to isolate whilst awaiting the result of the PCR result. One visitor refused testing because they didn't feel comfortable.

The DHSC will evaluate the pilot through interviews with homes and visitors, observations and review of all training and guidance.

The DHSC will lead a phased rolling out of the visitor testing to care homes in the first two weeks of December, ensuring all homes have this in place in time for Christmas.

2. Extra Care Housing Scheme

Devon County Council's Commissioning Strategy for Extra Care Housing (ECH) was approved by Cabinet in 2010 and included within it a needs assessment. The needs assessment was refreshed in 2015 by DCC's ECH lead, working with the DCC strategic planning team. The current needs assessment aligns to the strategic planning period up to 2033. This informs the Local Plans of the District Councils and is the one we use to inform our work with our housing/planning authority partners to identify suitable sites.

Edwards Court in Exeter is being developed by Exeter City Council and is due to complete in April 2021. We are in the process of jointly tendering for a housing and care operator for the scheme as a whole, with the City Council. This will provide 53 flats, leaving a forecast unmet need of a further 252 flats by 2033. We have stated that we would want these distributed across the city, which would include at least one scheme west of the Exe.

We are exploring the opportunity for a further ECH scheme of approx. 80 units on a site close to Morrison's supermarket.

Regarding the west of the Exe, we are continuing to look for a suitable site/opportunity, and are working closely with the City Council and the DCC strategic planning team to achieve this.

3. Carers and Young Carers

Adult carers of Adults

The Council supports adult carers both through its care management service and through its contract with Devon Carers.

Devon Carers is in contact with and providing support to 22,704 adult carers of adults.

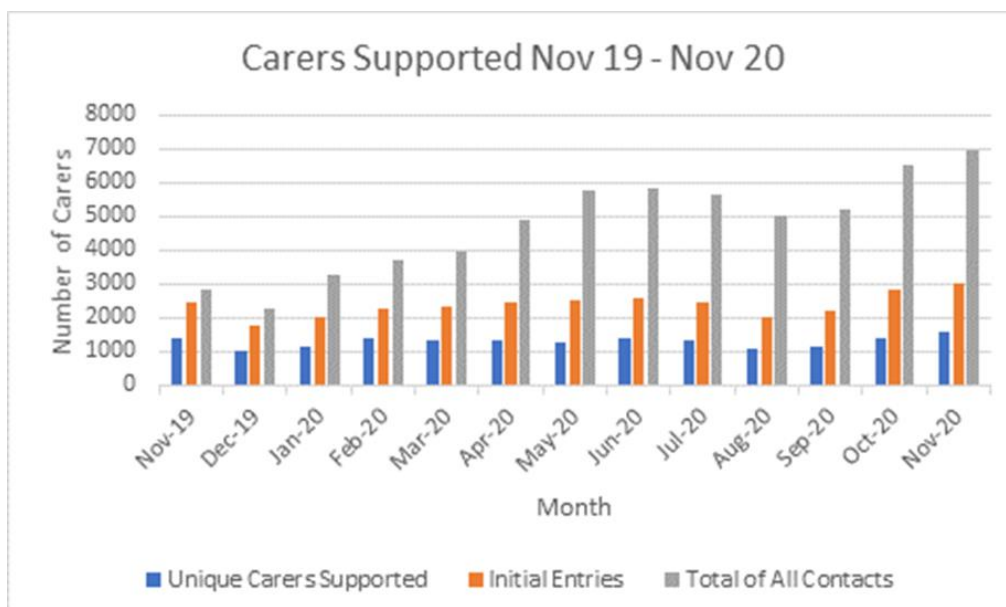
5,723 additional carers are known to the Council's care management services who are not known to Devon Carers, representing those cared-for people with the most complex needs, including those who require replacement care which numbered 536 in the last financial year (this financial year's figures will be heavily skewed due to COVID-19 and are unable to be reported).

The impact of the pandemic on carers is significant and, although the actual numbers of new carers is not yet known estimates are that, overall, the number has increased significantly. National estimates are that the total of people caring for adults may have increased by 50%. If replicated in Devon this would bring the number to of carers to 130,000 overall. At this stage it is unclear how long term this effect would be.

Calls to the Devon Carers contact centre increased in the quarter to end September to 3660, a 33% increase over the same time last year.

In 2019 the average number of new carers registered with Devon Carers was circa 300 per calendar month. In 2020 this has risen to 390 pcm. In May, August, and October this figure has been over 440 per month, with a peak at 489 in October

The chart below, backdated to November 2019 to show pre-COVID-19 support, shows that carer contacts have more than doubled over this period with a clear correlation to the pandemic's 'waves'.



Support offered to carers

In addition to the usual programme of support we have:

- A programme to identify carers early has been a long-standing part of the work but this has been strengthened in a new campaign, launched on 30th November to identify as many carers as possible
- A carers passport was also issued early in 2020 so that carers can show why they are travelling if stopped by the police
- PPE is also offered to carers free of charge where needed to fulfil their caring responsibilities
- The Devon Carers website and helpdesk provides a comprehensive service to carers seeking information, advice and support – both to those who are newly presenting and carers who are already in contact with the service. This is largely virtual or by telephone due to Covid restrictions
- Launched an invitation to care providers in October to join a list of replacement care services. This will shortly be made available to the public to access directly as well as to our staff to help them respond to carer need. A top priority for 2021 will be to develop this market
- A key feature of our response this year has been the early delivery of a service in the hospitals to support carers, prevent admission of cared for people and support discharge. Between April 2019 and end October 2020 this scheme helped 2,193 carers, 1,740 were not previously known to Devon Carers. This has been shortlisted for an award by the Health Service Journal and identified nationally as an exemplar of best practice
- Enhanced the availability of small Breaks payments, moving this to be available as quickly and as early as possible for carers to receive without the need for full assessment
- From mid-October offered a new small payments Covid 19 grants scheme for carers whose caring role has been adversely affected by Covid, and who otherwise might need an unscheduled review and an adjustment to a Direct Payment
- Provided ICT equipment to enable carers to stay in touch and also for Carer Ambassadors to participate in planning our response to carers
- Prioritised other improvements considered likely to be most urgently needed by carers such as online Peer Support and support to Contingency Planning.

Some aspects of our development programme for carers has had to be slowed or delayed to enable us to prioritise resources to offer this support to carers. We are also working with Devon Carers and the Carer Ambassadors to review the Carers' Offer and developing an action plan of priority areas of work for January-March 2021 that will improve support for carers as we enter a second wave recovery phase, these areas of priority are:

- **Personal wellbeing.** Focusing on supporting carers with developing personal resilience, coping skills, and stress management.
- **Promoting the independence of the cared-for person.** Focusing on empowering carers to be expert partners in care.
- **Breaks.** Focusing on both replacement care and enabling breaks which do not require replacement care.

- **Changes in care.** Focusing on supporting the cared-for person to live independently and supporting carers to develop the skills and confidence to enable this to happen.

Young carers who are being supported by the Young Carers Service from January 2020 to September 2020.

Summary

- There has been **an increase** from January 2020 in the number of young carers being supported by the service. **1,663** as at the end of Sept 2020
- Data indicates an increase in the number of open cases for young carers on The Early Help system, Right for Children, from February 2020. Also a small increase in the number of young carers known to the service and being supported through statutory Child in Need (CIN) and/ or child protection services and assessment. (see 'Getting More Help' below)
- There has been an increase in the number of 1st assessments the service have undertaken for young carers from January 2020 to September 2020. It is also worth noting the number of young carers who are awaiting an assessment from the service has also increased since January 2020 to September 2020. The Service Provider has a 'triage' process in place to help them to determine the priority for assessment. All young carers will receive communication indicating if they are waiting for an assessment. Work is underway with the provider to reduce this.

Service Support Offer	Number of Young Carers		
	Jan – Mar 2020	Apr – Jun 2020	Jul - Sept
Getting Advice	500	566	501
Getting Help	808	831	828
Getting More Help	82	86	83
Awaiting Assessment	165	217	251
1st assessment complete	92	126	131
Young carers known to the service also supported through CIN assessment	49	57	60
Young carers known to the also supported through child protection	34	36	44

Due to COVID many of the service functions have moved to a virtual delivery, however the service has worked to target face to face services for some young carers where this has been needed and in line with safety measures and national guidance to ensure safety of young carers and staff members.

- Assessments for young carers. The service has continued to undertake 1st assessments and review assessments using the outcomes to determine the level of service support which will best meet the needs of the young carer.
- Getting Advice support offer- This has continued through the period. Mode of delivery has been mainly through virtual methods with young carers.
- Getting Help service support offer: - This offer has seen the biggest impact due to COVID. Number of trips and activities and peer support group sessions run by the service and accessible locally in communities has significantly reduced due to COVID. Virtual groups have been created, developed and now offered as an alternative. Going forward likely a blended offer to continue with some face to face groups and virtual groups being available for young carers to choose from.

Additional activity in response to Covid/ Lockdown restrictions

- **Introduction of young carer ID cards** - ID cards were introduced following a request from a group of young carers for these during spring lockdown restrictions. Young carers have found these helpful in allowing them to continue with caring responsibilities through restrictions.
- **Getting More Help:** - Service have increased involvement with Early Help/ Multi-Agency support for young carers. The service are continuing to support partnership activity and engage through attending locality Early Help Triage and picking up relevant pieces of work.
- **The service has undertaken weekly 'check ins'** with as many of the most vulnerable young carers as possible through the period. Service have offered additional support and encouraged young carers to contact the service if they have needed less help previously but are now in need of additional support.
- **Transition support enhanced**, mostly delivered through virtual delivery method. Effective links with schools.
- **Continued multi-agency working** through the period to support young carers through Early Help and the Multi-Agency Steering Group This includes continuing to raise awareness of young carers as a vulnerable group of children and young people. The service have worked closely and successfully with Devon schools to facilitate support for young carers

**Councillor Andrew Leadbetter
Cabinet Member
Adult Social Care and Health Services**