

Report

Report to:	Employee Issues Forum
Date of Meeting:	18 May 2021
Report by:	Director, Health and Social Care

Subject:	Social Work Activity to Support COVID-19 Pandemic
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ update the Employee Issues Forum on the work undertaken by staff to establish a system for the sourcing, supply and distribution of PPE as part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic
- ◆ presentation on the delivery of Meals at Home by the Unpaid Work Service.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Employee Issues Forum is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the content of the report and the presentations be noted;

3. Background

- 3.1. The COVID-19 pandemic brought with it a number of new operational challenges for services, many of which are now very familiar given the worldwide, national and local profile surrounding the impact of the pandemic.
- 3.2. One such challenge was the sourcing, supply and distribution of PPE to ensure that staff could (safely) continue to provide vital frontline services to their local populations in line with Public Health Scotland guidance.
- 3.3. From a social care staffing perspective, whilst the use of PPE was not new to practice, the requirements of changing Public Health Scotland (PHS) guidance altered how staff would have to practice, particularly as more and more became known about the virus. For example, the use of masks were not part of standard practice across the social care sector in a pre-Covid-19 environment, nor for that matter were the volumes of other items such as visors, gloves, aprons and hand sanitiser.
- 3.4. Unlike NHS partners, where PPE is supplied directly via National Services Scotland (NSS), social care providers have always had a responsibility to procure their own PPE in line with the needs of infection, prevention and control guidance.
- 3.5. Given that social care across Scotland is delivered through a mixed market of provision, it was therefore not only Council social care provision, but also external social care provision that had to be taken account of in a PPE context. Expanding on this, what this meant in a South Lanarkshire context was trying to secure provision of PPE for home care, care homes, adult supported living providers, unpaid

carers and personal assistants or approximately 200 organisations to supply to across the sector. This also included additional services as they were being set up eg homeless unit.

4. Resourcing these New Requirements/Demands

- 4.1. Given the scale of the challenge and the projected demand for PPE that would be required to safely sustain frontline social care services, the Scottish Government in partnership with NSS, COSLA, Scottish Care and local Health and Social Care Partnerships agreed to provide social care with access to additional PPE through nationally procured supplies. This would supplement PPE already being procured by individual providers.
- 4.2. To enable this nationally sourced PPE to make its way to frontline services in local areas, the Scottish Government requested local HSCPs to establish a PPE Hubs and local logistics to ensure provider could access supply.
- 4.3. Therefore, in both a Council and provider context what this essentially would mean is that local procurement of PPE would continue and that a top up supply would be directed to the local PPE Hub to help resource pressures across the whole sector.

5. Creating the Team and Local Infrastructure

- 5.1. As will no doubt be appreciated, all of the above was evolving at pace and required a local response from a South Lanarkshire perspective in terms of implementing the above.
- 5.2. A number of actions were taken as outlined below to bring about an infrastructure which would deliver on this including:-
 - ◆ sourcing and securing PPE supply through a combination of procuring stock, Council social care services and through NSS for the wider sector requirements
 - ◆ a building of sufficient size to receive and store PPE in large volumes
 - ◆ setting up a stock and order system to account for all PPE received and distributed
 - ◆ developing a distribution system to minimise any footfall at the Hub through Providers turning up to collect PPE
 - ◆ keeping up to speed with HPS Guidance
 - ◆ developing product knowledge to advise frontline services
 - ◆ building a demand profile of the weekly volumes of PPE required to sustain the social care sector in South Lanarkshire
 - ◆ setting up a drop box and contact numbers for the Hub
 - ◆ staffing the Hub to assimilate orders on a daily basis
 - ◆ developing links with a number of internal and external partners, including NSS, Lanarkshire Carers and Take Control
 - ◆ influencing the national strategy with regards to ensuring the model for PPE would work in a local context
 - ◆ developing and implementing a communications strategy across the social care sector informing when the PPE Hub would go live and operate
 - ◆ responding to COVID outbreaks on an emergency basis
 - ◆ ensuring service coverage across 7 days per week

5.3. Resourcing this involved setting up a new multi – disciplinary team and developing a clear strategy based on responding to all of the above. This team comprised mainly of staff who either took on additional duties or were re-deployed to support the emergency response. The profile of team is detailed below:-

- ◆ staff from Performance and Support Services of the HSCP (Planning staff and administration staff)
- ◆ Housing and Technical Resources staff (including those with trades) to take on roles such as receiving stock, making up orders, delivering to provider through a fleet of vans and ensuring robust stock control measures
- ◆ dedicated Procurement Officers nested within the PPE team to source PPE required for Council in-house services
- ◆ I.T staff to ensure the communication infrastructure was established for the Hub
- ◆ aligned staff from NSS as key point of contact and also to agree weekly PPE distribution
- ◆ expert advice and support provided by NHS Lanarkshire regarding procurement and how to source and use more specialist items such as masks that require face fit testing

6. The Impact of the PPE Hub and Next Steps

6.1. It is clear that the PPE Hub has become a core service over the last year and is now fully embedded as part of the social care delivery model. To give an idea of the size and scale of the operation and at the height of the pandemic, an example of a weekly PPE distribution is detailed below:-

- ◆ 210,000 masks
- ◆ 210,000 aprons
- ◆ 420,000 gloves
- ◆ 11,000 visors

6.2. As at January 2021, the PPE Hub has received and managed approximately 25 million items of PPE and more recently took on a roll for the supply Lateral Flow Testing kits for Council staff working in Day Care and Fieldwork Services as well as Personal Assistants. Additionally, recording and monitoring PCR testing across home care services is also a component part of the Hub role.

6.3. In terms of the longevity of this service, the PPE Hub has now been in place since March, 2020 and there is currently a Memorandum of Understanding between the Scottish Government, Scottish Care, local HSCPs and NSS to continue to supply PPE Hubs until June 2021. The future model and supply of PPE to social care is now being considered as part of a wider national strategy and the next steps are awaited from this work.

6.4. Aside from this, PPE as noted above has always been a part of social care delivery and now forms a core part of other aspects of Council service delivery. Therefore, it is anticipated that current usage and PHS Guidance will remain in place for the foreseeable future.

6.5. In preparation for services progressively beginning to step up, the PPE Hub has now been moved to a more suitable and permanent location, within a custom fit unit in Whistleberry Industrial Estate and the future staffing of the Hub is also being considered as many of the staff who currently resource this are due to return to their substantive duties.

7. Employee Implications

7.1. There are no employee implications associated with this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1. There are no financial implications associated with this report.

9. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

9.1. There are no Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications arising from the information presented in this report.

10. Other Implications

10.1. There are no other implications associated with this report.

11. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

11.1. This report does not introduce a new policy or strategy and therefore does not require an impact assessment.

Val de Souza
Director, Health and Social Care

5 May 2021

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- ◆ Accountable, effective and efficient
- ◆ Working with and respecting others
- ◆ People focused
- ◆ Fair and open

Previous References

- ◆ None

List of Background Papers

- ◆ None

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:

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