

	<p align="center">Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee 14 March 2022</p>
	<p align="center">Report from the Strategic Director of Community Wellbeing</p>
<p align="center">Residential and Nursing Care Services in Brent</p>	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Non-Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
No. of Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Andrew Davies Head of Commissioning, Contracting and Market Management Adult Social Care Andrew.Davies@brent.gov.uk

1. Summary

1.1 Members of the Community and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee have asked for a report on residential and nursing services in Brent. This report covers –

- A summary of care home services provided for residents in Brent
- The commissioning responsibilities of the Council under the Care Act 2014, and the strategies in place to shape the marketplace and commission the right services.
- An overview of the financial position of care homes in Brent, including details on average weekly rates for nursing and residential care and full year expenditure on nursing and residential care.
- How the Council measures and monitors the quality of provider services.
- The Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic including the key challenges and support provided.
- The post Covid position for care homes in Brent, including how the Council will work with the health and social care sector to make services better and easier to access.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Community and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee are recommended to note the report and ask questions to the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and officers on the issues raised.

3. Background

Overview of Residential and Nursing Services in Brent

- 3.1 Residential and nursing care services play an important role in the delivery of social care support to people in Brent. There are 57 residential and nursing homes in Brent, with 1,095 beds, employing over 1,200 people. Of the 57 homes in the borough, 11 are nursing homes for older adults and 46 are residential services. Of the 46 residential services, there are –

- 28 services for people with learning disabilities
- 6 specialist mental health services
- 10 older adult residential homes
- 1 sensory impairment service
- 1 substance misuse service

- 3.2 The majority of services in Brent are rated Good by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). A breakdown of the CQC ratings for Brent care homes is included in the table below.

Table 1 – Care Home CQC Ratings in Brent

CQC Rating	Number of homes
Outstanding	1
Good	45
Requires Improvement	9
Inadequate	1

- 3.3 Around half of Brent care homes are owned and operated by national companies. The remaining 50% are part of smaller organisations, with multiple care homes in the local area, or independent, one-off services. Some national providers have a considerable presence in Brent – MHA has three nursing homes and one residential home in the borough, with a total of 188 beds. However, the provider with the most services in Brent is a local company, Franklyn Lodge, with seven residential services (and two supported living services) for people with learning disabilities, but only 38 residential beds.
- 3.4 Brent is currently commissioning 323 nursing placements and 414 residential placements. 51.3% of Brent's commissioned placements are in care homes in the borough; 48.7% of placements are in care homes outside of Brent. The London average for placements in borough is 52.5%, suggesting that Brent is not an outlier on this. The vast majority of Brent's placements are in homes rated Outstanding or Good (83.5%) compared to the London Average of 79.5% of placements in Outstanding or Good homes.

- 3.5 Brent pays an average net cost of £660 per week for each residential and nursing placement commissioned. The average gross cost of a Brent care home placement is £930 per week, once CCG and client contributions are taken into account. Each year we complete a piece of work with other councils in the West London Alliance to look at the cost of residential and nursing care placements. This work helps us to set price bands for new placements and agree inflationary uplifts on existing placements. Independent analysis of the costs of care inform this work so that prices are set based on the real costs of care in this sector.
- 3.6 Brent's care home placement categories are broken down as follows –

Table 2 – Brent Care Home Placements

Placement Type	Number of people
Learning Disability	119
Older Adults	533
Mental Health	32
Physical Disabilities	53

Commissioning Approach

- 3.7 The Adult Social Care Commissioning Service has a Residential and Nursing Team that is responsible for the commissioning and quality assurance of care home services and placements. The team carries out statutory safeguarding enquiries in Brent Care Homes and individual placement reviews with Brent service users placed in nursing or residential care (whether those placements are made in borough or out of borough). The team was created when the current Commissioning structure was implemented in 2017. The benefit of creating a team that has oversight of the care home market is that work on quality assurance, placement review and safeguarding is done by one team, helping to form an overall view of quality in the care home sector. Each home has an allocated Placement Relationship Officer (PRO), who is responsible for quality assurance and service user reviews within their allocated portfolio of homes.
- 3.8 The Residential and Nursing Team is able to bring together the intelligence it gathers from its three areas of work to give a comprehensive picture of residential and nursing services in the borough. As well as information gathered by our own staff, we take into account views of residents, family members and other professionals working in care homes (specialist health staff for example), to build up a picture of quality in Brent services. The team shares information and intelligence on a quarterly basis with the Care Quality Commission, the national regulator of care services, to help inform its view on care home provision in Brent. Each home is given a RAG rating based on their work and this determines the frequency of quality assurance visits. The frequency of visits is based on risk and quality of care; the number of placements the council has with the provider and the size of the care home. Larger homes, with multiple placements, will be visited more frequently than smaller services, unless the risk profile justifies more regular visits to the smaller service.
- 3.9 Having an allocated PRO is a particularly effective way of working with the care home sector. With nearly 60 homes in the borough, having a good oversight of the sector is crucial. With each PRO managing a portfolio of 8-10 homes each, this becomes more manageable. It also gives care home managers a route through which to contact the council when seeking support, which has been particularly

important over the last couple of years as the council and providers have been managing the Covid 19 pandemic.

- 3.10 The council and partners are engaged in a variety of work with care home providers to improve the quality of the Brent care home sector. Brent runs a monthly care home forum, which is used as a mechanism to communicate and work with homes on good practice developments across the sector. The forum is regularly attended by colleagues from Public Health, the CCG and other partners to help registered managers with initiatives and good practice that can lead to better resident care. The forum is chaired by Basu Lamichhane, manager of Victoria Care Centre. Basu is also a member of the Brent Health and Wellbeing Board, providing a direct link from the care home sector to the Board.
- 3.11 Brent is running a programme of care home improvement through the Enhanced Health in Care Homes Programme. This programme is jointly funded and commissioned by the council and CCG and delivered with key partners including GPs and CLCH (Brent's community healthcare provider). The main areas of work in the programme include working with providers on key areas of training and development for staff, medication safety in care homes and implementing the Primary Care Network Directed Enhanced Services (DES), which aligns each care home with a GP and multi-disciplinary team to support personalised care and support in Brent's care homes. The programme has also delivered the Covid 19 vaccination role out in Brent Care Homes. Vaccination levels amongst care home residents are very high – 94% of residents have had two doses of the vaccination, and 90% have received their booster.
- 3.12 The Enhanced Health in Care Homes Programme also includes a Peer Support Programme, which has provided intense, dedicated support to care homes in the borough for that last year. The Peer Support programme is led by Mark Bird, previously registered manager at Birchwood Grange Care Home, Brent's only Outstanding rated care home. Mark has worked with 10 care homes during the Peer Support programme, working with managers on improvements that can be made to practice and care provision in their services. Homes have been involved for a variety of reasons – some have welcomed the additional input ahead of a CQC inspection, others because there were concerns about the quality of care and so they have benefited from the bespoke support of a former registered manager. The feedback on the programme has been very positive and three of the homes that were subsequently inspected by CQC have seen their ratings improve from Requires Improvement to Good, reflecting the work undertaken by the care home managers and staff, and the programme's input. The remaining seven services are still to be inspected by CQC.
- 3.13 Commissioning of care home provision is interconnected with other commissioning strategies used by the council, particularly the Brent Supported Living Programme (previously known as NAIL). The council's move to using supported living and extra care services in recent years has meant that there had been a reduction in nursing and residential placements. In 2016 Brent had 871 residential and nursing placements; we now have 737. Whilst the overall trend is downwards, this is more stark amongst certain client groups. For example, as Brent has opened more supported living provision for people with learning disabilities, the number of LD placements in care homes has dropped from 191 in January 2016 to 103 in October 2021.

- 3.14 The council's commissioning strategy is to continue to look for alternatives to residential and nursing care provision. This isn't a reflection of the quality of nursing or residential care available in Brent, but part of the council's commitment to support people to live as independently as possible, in the least restrictive settings available.
- 3.15 The Brent Supported Living programme is a major cross-council strategic initiative to provide high quality accommodation for a range of vulnerable people. When established, it was designed to offer a viable alternative to residential care for people with high support needs, through providing schemes that promote wellbeing and the ability to live independently through good design. Through the delivery of the programme, we have seen a significant reduction in the use of residential care, particularly in the LD sector.
- 3.16 The programme also generates efficiency savings as ASC only pays for the 'care and support' element of the service, which is our statutory obligation, leaving the individual to claim housing benefit for the accommodation costs. This also entitles service users to claim benefits (which they are not eligible for in residential care) to enable them to pay for social activities, utilities, food etc. This represents an average weekly saving of £331 per person to the Adult Social Care budget, compared to accommodation provided in a care setting.
- 3.17 The Brent Supported Living programme is an umbrella term for delivery of a range of different types of accommodation with support. The types of accommodation can be summarised as follows:
- Extra Care Sheltered Housing (ECSH) – these are larger schemes (40+ units) for people aged 50 and over who have significant Care Act eligible care and support needs. A characteristic of ECSH is that each unit is self-contained, meaning everyone has their own front door. Schemes are mixed client group use, meaning they can support older people with learning disabilities and mental health issues as well as frail elderly people without those additional needs.
 - 24hr Supported Living - these are smaller schemes for people with mental health issues, learning disabilities, dual diagnosis (mental health and substance misuse), autism, sensory impairment and physical disabilities. Schemes are usually, although not exclusively, for working age adults, and support younger people with disabilities who are transitioning from children's services to adult services.
- 3.18 Whilst our commissioning approach is mainly focussed on developing the supported living and extra care sectors, there will continue to be a need for nursing and residential services and so our quality assurance work will remain of upmost importance. However, from a commissioning perspective the council will continue to look at alternative provision to nursing and residential care where it can, as it focusses on developing other aspects of the care market and works to keep people at home, in familiar environments, as much as possible.

Impact of Covid 19

- 3.19 The Covid 19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the care home sector, and an impact that is still being felt today. Managing a care home whilst dealing with an unknown virus presented a huge challenge to the care sector in Brent, but it was a challenge that has been largely managed with determination, professionalism and reliance that is to be admired.

- 3.20 In 2020 the impact of the first wave of the pandemic was significant. A number of care homes in the borough dealt with serious Covid 19 outbreaks, that unfortunately led to deaths in those homes. Given that Brent's community was also badly affected by the first wave, it is not surprising that care homes were also impacted early on in the pandemic.
- 3.21 The support that the council and partners provided to care homes was delivered early, and was comprehensive across the care home sector. PPE was provided to all homes by the end of March 2020; infection control training was delivered initially by our Public Health Team and then by NHS colleagues, again to all homes (not just nursing homes); support with staffing cover was arranged by the council where providers lost staff due to Covid 19 isolation; PROs worked with care home managers to troubleshoot problems and escalate issues to senior managers in the council and NHS if more support was needed.
- 3.22 The combined efforts of care home managers and staff and support from the council and NHS, did have an impact. Brent's Covid 19 related deaths per 1000 care home beds since January 2020 is the fifth lowest in London. This is despite being one of the boroughs most impacted by Covid 19 in terms of community cases and deaths, particularly in the first wave of the pandemic. The support that the council and partners put in place for care homes has meant that the impact of each wave of Covid 19 has been managed, and providers are now well equipped to deal with outbreaks in their care homes. The package of measures Brent has made available, along with the high vaccination levels amongst residents and staff have had a positive impact.
- 3.23 The numbers of care home placements, particularly nursing home placements, has fluctuated as a result of the pandemic. In October 2019, Brent was commissioning 332 nursing home placements. This dropped to 268 in October 2020, but has increased again to 323 by October 2021, driven by an increase in older adult placements. There are a few reasons for this. Firstly, the reduction was due to deaths during to the pandemic. However, there were also changes to care home commissioning arrangements between March 2020 and April 2021. During this time the NHS commissioned nursing home placements for people being discharged from hospital. The council was not responsible for new care home placements for over a year, where the placement was supporting a hospital discharge. As a result, the number of placements the council commissioned reduced, and have only recovered to pre-pandemic levels during 2021/22. We are now commissioning placements again, and have taken on responsibility for placements made by the NHS during 2020/21, driving the increase in placements and spending on nursing care.
- 3.24 As a result of this change in commissioning arrangements, the council is forecast to spend £13.5m on nursing care services and £18.1m on residential care services in 2021/22. This compares to £12m spent on nursing care and £18.5m on residential care in 2020/21.
- 3.25 Throughout the pandemic occupancy in Brent care homes has remained high, despite the outbreaks and number of people who have passed away in care homes. Occupancy in Brent homes has averaged over 90% through the pandemic, and is currently close to 100%. This is a reflection of the different commissioning arrangements, where CCGs and local authorities are commissioning care home placements in their own boroughs and other boroughs. Despite the challenges of Covid 19, across the care home market occupancy has not been significantly affected over the course of the pandemic.

- 3.26 There are challenges in the sector, not least with staffing. Since November 2021 it has been a legal requirement for anyone working in a care home to be vaccinated against Covid 19. The vaccination requirement has meant that some staff chose to leave the care home sector, creating issues with staffing in care homes. The council has supported with assistance from Brent Works to help providers recruit staff, and match people looking for jobs in care with vacancies in the care sector. We have also pass-ported on funding from the Infection Control and Workforce Recruitment and Retention Funds to care providers to help with recruitment. Over £7m has been paid to Brent care providers since May 2020 from these funds.
- 3.27 Three Brent residential homes have closed since March 2020. There are different reasons for each of the closures; one was due to provider failure during the early stages of the Covid 19 pandemic. One was due to falling resident numbers due to a change in local demography, where the pandemic accelerated the decision to close. The final home closed because the owner / manager decided to retire and de-register the property. It means that our residential bed numbers have reduced, but as explained in this report, our commissioning approach to is move away from this sector and focus on extra care services for older adults and supported living provision for working age adults.

Moving on from Covid 19

- 3.28 The past two years has been time of challenge for the care sector, as providers have managed the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic. Although wider society is returning to life as normal, there will still be challenges for the residential and nursing home sector to manage. Whilst guidance from the Department of Health and Social Care is still awaited, locally the borough's Director of Public Health has advised care homes open up with caution – staff should still be testing regularly, visitors to care homes should also test before they enter services, and good infection control measures (such as wearing PPE and regular handwashing) should continue. Unfortunately, managing the impact of the virus is likely to be a regular facet of care home management for some time to come.
- 3.29 That said, there are other areas that will be returning to business as usual. Within the Adult Social Care Commissioning Team, planned quality assurance visits will be reinstated, and more in-person reviews will be undertaken. These haven't been completely suspended during the pandemic, but there have been times when they have been scaled back as homes dealt with outbreaks. More in-person visits will take place in the coming weeks and months to make sure our oversight function is fulfilled, and we have as comprehensive a picture as possible on care home quality in the borough.
- 3.30 Further work will be taken forward by the Enhanced Health in Care Home programme, overseen by the Brent Care Home Forum, to drive improvement in the care sector in the borough. The commitment from the council, CCG and other partners to this programme is clear and will offer a wide range of support to providers, informed by their participation in the forum, to lead to further service improvement.

REPORT SIGN-OFF

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