

Wessex Care Briefing 2021 Number 2 (19/02/21)

Since our last briefing on the 15th January all our energies have been focused at managing through the peak of this third wave supporting the hospitals, two outbreaks and continued support to our community customers.

Headlines

We discussed in the last briefing the outbreak at Kimberly East which was eventually contained and is now clear with the unit reopening to admissions on the 11th February. Sadly, a number of residents have passed as a result of their frailty and COVID infection.

Also, in our last briefing we touched on a scare at Milford Manor which proved to be a probable false positive but we are saddened to report that unrelated to the initial scare the virus did find its way into this most vulnerable group and again sadly we have lost a number of our special residents. There have been separate briefings and direct contact with families concerning this outbreak which is now past its infectious period and the unit will be reopening as per PHE guidance on the 22nd February.

The teams have worked very hard to support all residents, battling, where appropriate and with consent, to preserve life wherever possible or supporting a peaceful, dignified, accompanied and pain free passing. We thank each and every one of you for your dedication, care and commitment during this heart rendering period. We will find time and space to remember them and your personal sadness and grief.

It is good to be able to report that most other residents have either been asymptomatic or have recovered back to their original baseline health and wellbeing parameters with a couple still fighting the good fight.

Our thoughts and condolences are with all the families that have lost a loved one to this most vicious and infectious virus.

Little Manor Care Centre duly went operational as a COVID+ Hospital Discharge Support Unit in time to support, principally, Salisbury District Hospital in their hour of need or rather their peak month of need with in excess of 30 rapid admission within a few days of opening and are working to near capacity in ongoing support to the hospitals across Wiltshire which will be required till at least the end of March. The unit will remain on HDSU standby to support a 4th wave if required. This has been a fantastic achievement in such a short space of time which made a huge difference to the hospital, to many families and their loved ones. Well done team you should be rightly proud of how you met for a second time this extraordinary challenge.

Some Good News

Vaccination

All resident that wish to have and can have the vaccination have now been vaccinated (98%) and all new residents are either vaccinated before they arrive or this is arranged shortly after arrival. When this is combined with now 95% of eligible staff having been vaccinated, we have a rapidly developing

change to our visiting risk profile. We will continue to support this by, of course, maintaining our Infection Prevention and Control IPC Amber level standards including PPE and continued compliance with PHE testing regime of staff, residents and visitors.

For reassurance we will continue to follow PHE & DHSC and local agency agreements on the requirements for hospital discharge into a care home setting which included a 14-day isolation period for all new admissions.

Visiting

While still adhering as closely as possible to the PHE & DHSC guidance on kinship visiting the above does allow us to begin to relax the current visiting restriction for all non-palliative care visits. Therefore, as of the 1st March we will be returning to our previous position on controlled visiting. To be clear our pods, either external or internal, are not air tight sealed separate units so there remains a risk of air transmission however our risk assessment along with our IPC measure we consider sufficiently mitigates the risk of air transmission to allow these visits to be recommenced.

Malcolm and the teams will therefore restart the booking process with the original required compliances but with the real hope that we will see a further relaxation over the coming weeks as the vaccines first and second dose really start to take effect. We will be asking all resident visitors, as part of the required individual resident risk assessment, if the visitor has had COVID and or been vaccinated and when, this may determine the parameters of the visit. There is of course a balance as always to be had from moving to quickly as the R rate descends to a never-ending restriction on kinship visits. We have been considered and firm when restricting visits where we assessed this as being in the best interests of individual and groups of residents and therefore, we will be equally considered and firm in our relaxation of visiting requirements. We may face a 4th spike but we will deal with that if it happens but in the mean time lets get back to some contact.

Finally, we can confirm that there have been no outbreaks in any other services which with the vaccine information above provides an increasing level of protection as the days go by and will be enhanced by the second vaccination which will start for staff on the 16th March. Well done to all of these teams, their residents and families who have had to live with the dread of the virus getting in before the vaccination programme could be of benefit to the lives of all concerned.

To all, we are here, as always, to answer any concerns or support requirements you may need. We can see light at the end of the tunnel and we don't think it's an oncoming train!

Pauline, Matthew, Jodie & Christian