

<b>Local Members Interest</b>
N/A

## **Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee - Tuesday 16 March 2021**

### **Care Homes for Older People: Implications of COVID-19 for Council strategy**

#### **Recommendation**

I recommend that the Committee:

- a. Consider and comment on the impact of COVID-19 on care homes for older people and the implications for Council strategy.

#### **Report of Dr Johnny McMahon, Cabinet Member for Health, Care and Wellbeing**

#### **Summary**

##### **What is the Select Committee being asked to do and why?**

1. COVID-19 has had a profound impact on care homes for older people and their residents and this will have implications for the type and volume of care Staffordshire will require in the future and the Council's strategic approach to the market.
2. Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee is invited to consider the impact of COVID-19 as set out in this report and note this will be taken into account in an updated market position statement to be published in Spring / Summer 2021.

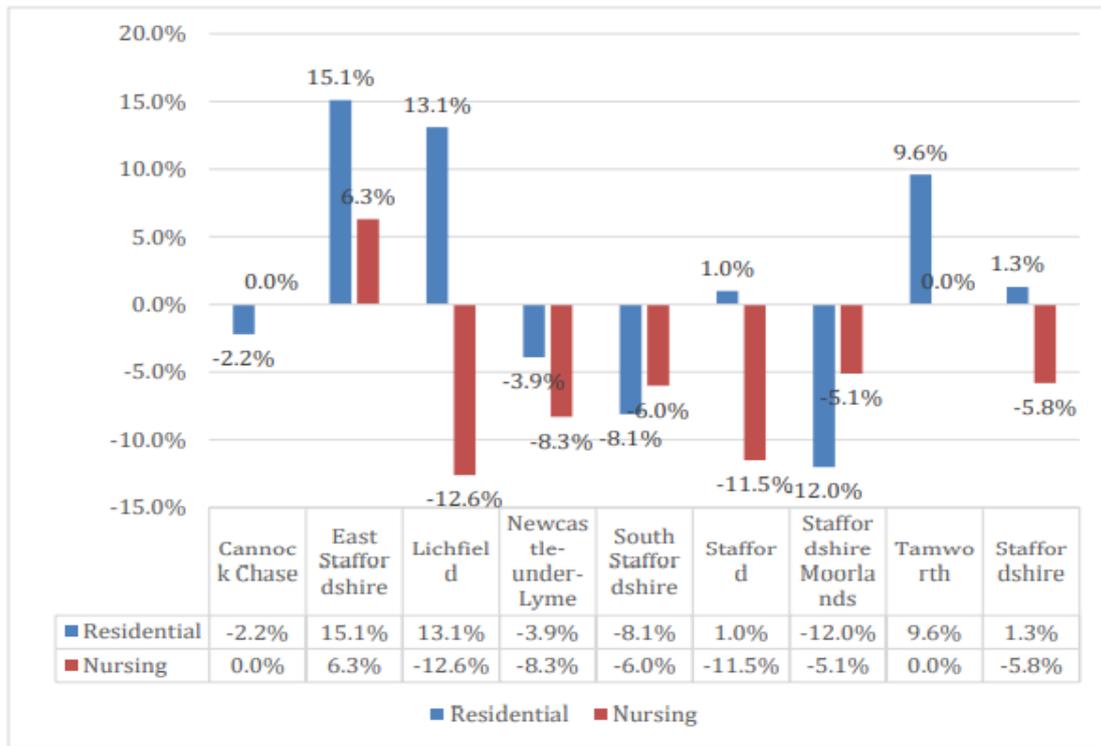
#### **Report**

##### **Care homes for older people**

3. There are 182 care homes registered for care of older people in Staffordshire, 108 residential and 74 nursing. These care homes have a total of 7,087 beds: 2,910 residential and 4,177 nursing. The numbers of care homes and beds has been decreasing in recent years (figure 1).
4. The Council commissions 2,258 care home placements for older people, 1,838 in county and 420 out of county. The remaining 4,829 care home beds in Staffordshire are either used by self-funders, the NHS or other local authorities, or are vacant.

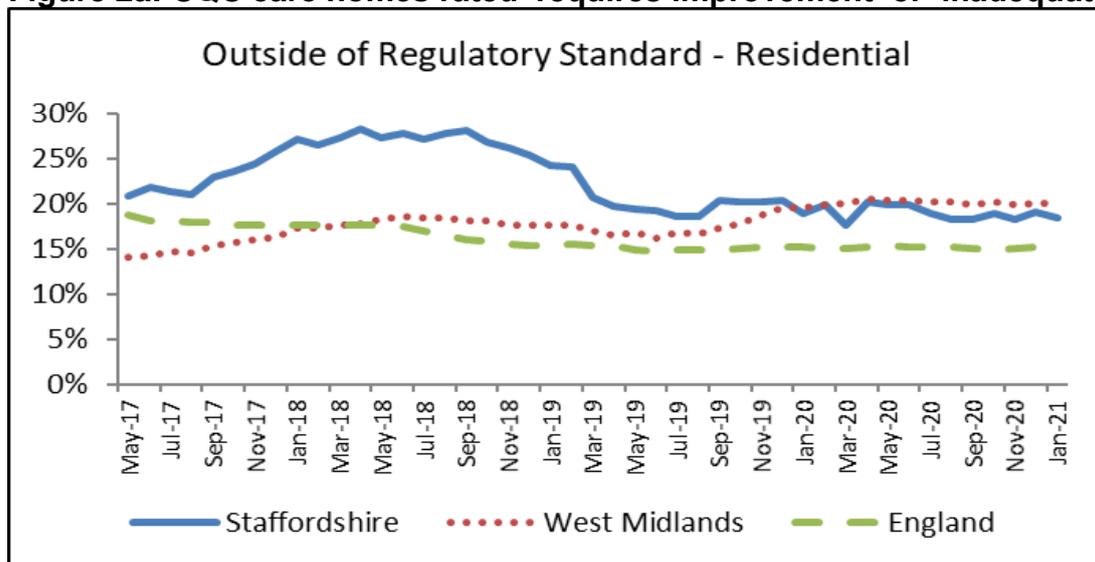
**Figure 1a: changes in numbers of care home beds in Staffordshire February 2016 to February 2019**

[Source: Final Joint Market Management Strategy for Residential and Nursing Care Homes in Staffordshire, SCIE.]

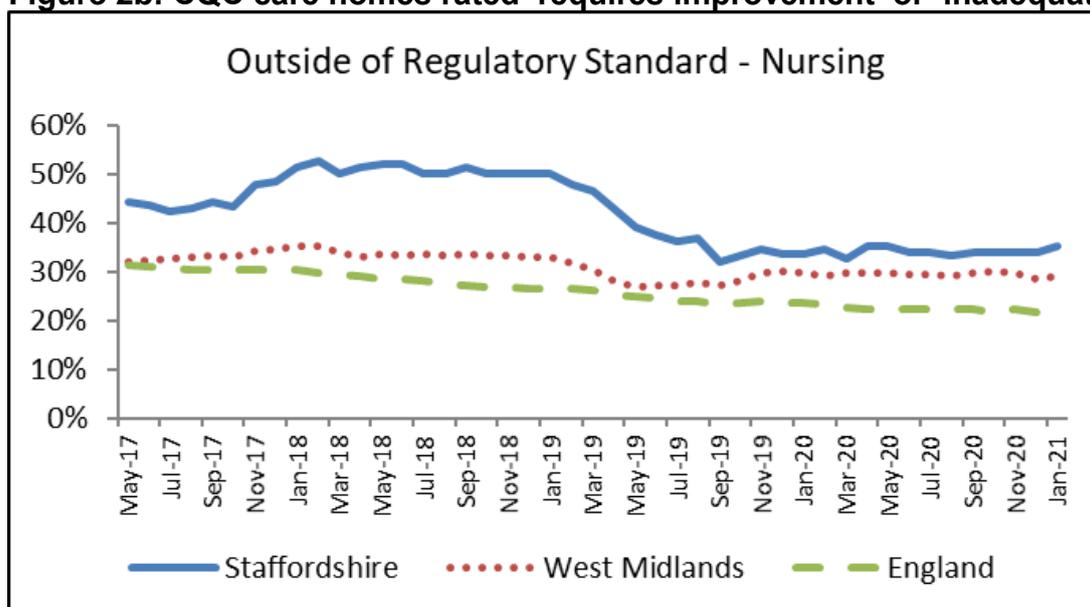


5. Care homes are regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The CQC rates 18% of Staffordshire’s residential and 35% of Staffordshire’s nursing homes as ‘requires improvement’ or ‘inadequate’. These figures have fallen from 21% for residential and 44% for nursing homes in May 2017 (figure 2), and remain slightly above the England averages of 15% for residential and 22% for nursing homes.

**Figure 2a: CQC care homes rated ‘requires improvement’ or ‘inadequate’**



**Figure 2b: CQC care homes rated ‘requires improvement’ or ‘inadequate’**



### Commissioning arrangements

6. The Council uses a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) to purchase new care home placements. A profile of the client is sent electronically to a range of care homes contracted on standard terms and conditions with the Council and invites offers to meet their assessed eligible needs. There are currently 451 care homes contracted on the DPS in 10 lots, four of which are to provide care for older people (table 1).

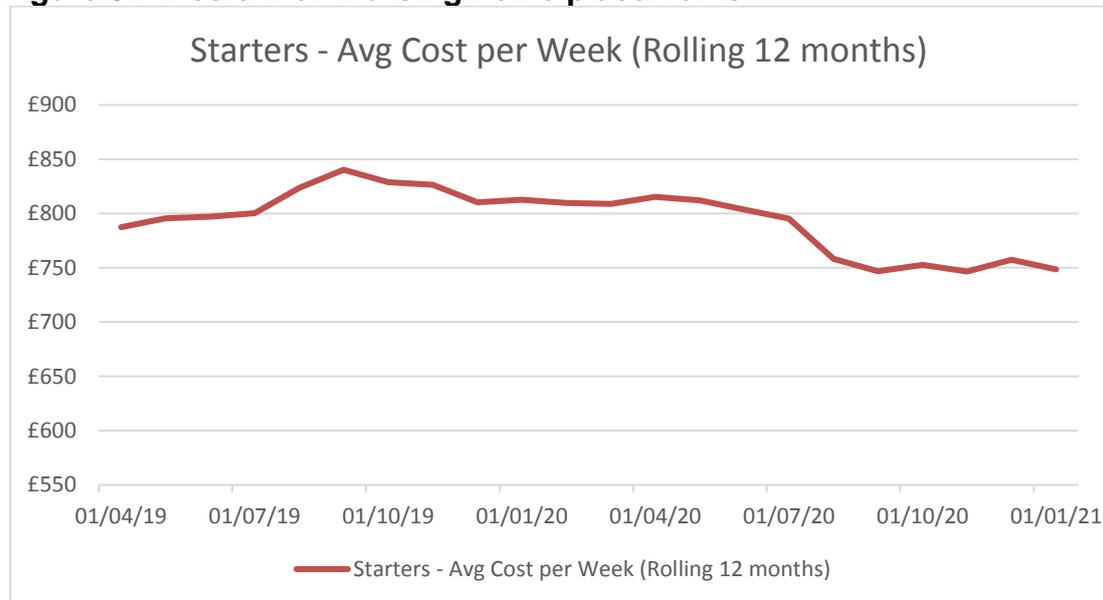
**Table 1: care homes contracted to provide care for older people**

Lot	Number of contracted homes
1. Residential without dementia	147
2. Residential with dementia	144
6. Nursing without dementia	65
7. Nursing with dementia	63

7. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic the price of nursing home placements for older people was rising rapidly. In April 2019 Cabinet approved recommendations to support the development of market, and increase supply, to ensure that the Council could continue to meet the assessed eligible needs of older people at a cost-effective price. These included:
  - a. Approval of the award of block booked contracts for long-term care home placements and the required support services to manage these placements.
  - b. Completion of a Joint Strategic Care Home Review with the NHS.
  - c. Extension of the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) Agreement as appropriate.

8. In the wake of this the Council commissioned 183 block booked block booked nursing beds capacity available for the Council to use. Those beds in payment are typically 90% full, at an average price of £624 per week. This gives a cost-effective option for people requiring nursing care, and has had a positive effect on prices, with the average price of new nursing home placements for older people reduced from £840 in Sept 2019 to £749 currently (figure 3).

**Figure 3: Price of new nursing home placements**



9. In June and September 2019, Cabinet approved proposals for the Council to develop Council owned older people's nursing homes and to appoint an external care provider to operate these care homes. Cabinet also approved the redevelopment of the Hillfield site in Burton Upon Trent to provide 38 nursing home beds; and development of two new Council owned nursing care homes, one in Stafford and one in South Staffordshire, to provide a total of 120-200 nursing beds, subject to final sign-off of the business case by the County Treasurer.
10. A provider was appointed to operate Council owned nursing homes, and design work for redevelopment of the Hillfield site was completed, however this was not progressed because of the advent of COVID-19 in February 2020, and in September 2020 Cabinet agreed to pause this project. The business case for development of two new Council owned nursing care homes has been suspended as a result of the pandemic, and will be resumed when longer term demand in the wake of the pandemic is clearer.
11. The Joint Strategic Care Home Review with the NHS was completed and concluded that the Council and the Clinical Commissioning Groups should:
- Develop a joint strategic approach to the market.
  - Build better relationships and an engagement approach with the market.
  - Develop options for market shaping.
  - Improve clinical and health care support for care homes.
  - Better understand the self-funder market.
  - Promote technology enabled care.

12. Again, the advent of COVID-19 has affected our ability to progress these recommendations and they will be revisited once the pandemic is under control.

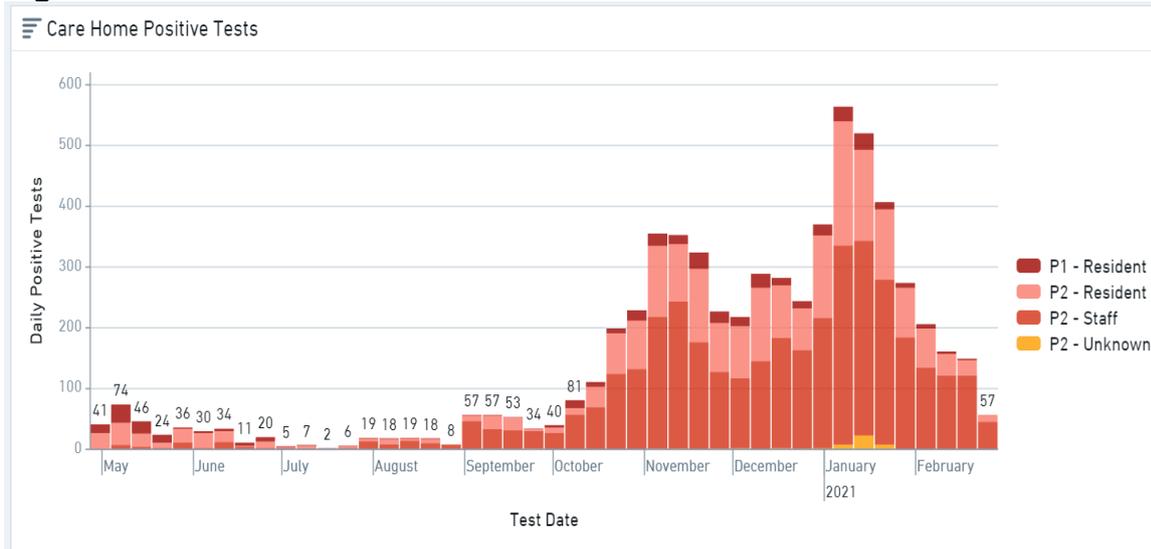
### **Impact of COVID-19**

13. COVID-19 has had a profound impact on care homes for older people and their residents from the outset. The Council has been supporting care homes throughout the pandemic with:

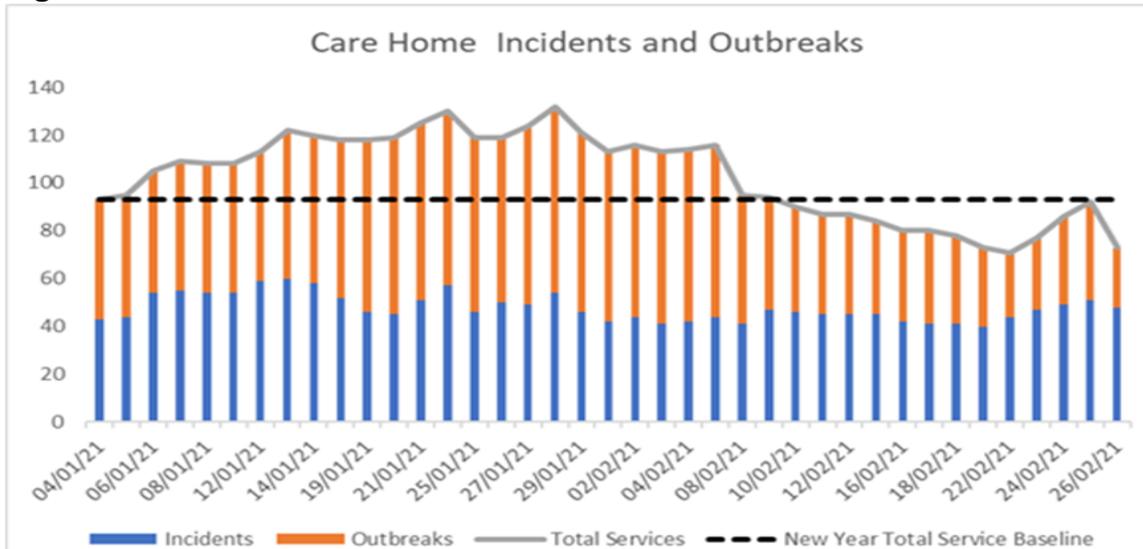
- a. Advice and practical assistance to enhance infection prevention and control;
- b. Advice to support management of cases, clusters and outbreaks - more than 953 incidents so far, including outbreaks within individual care homes, many of them large and complex;
- c. Working with the NHS to develop hospital discharge pathways to ensure that care homes are protected from new infections introduced from hospitals;
- d. Additional staff to support business continuity;
- e. Personal protective equipment supplies;
- f. Additional funding from the Infection Control Fund provided by HM Government - a total of £18.19m during 2020/21;
- g. £19.776m additional one off funding paid to care homes of which £12.18m was from Infection Control Fund Grants 1 and 2;
- h. Support to establish testing for residents and staff;
- i. Support to access COVID vaccination for residents and staff; and
- j. Links to NHS skills and resources, such as the local Infection Prevention; and Control team and the Midlands Partnership Foundation NHS Trust Intensive Support Team.

14. The immediate impact of COVID-19 on care homes is abating. As at the beginning of March, approximately 92.5% of residents and 78% of staff have received their first dose of vaccination, and this along with the lockdown has reduced the number of cases, outbreaks and deaths (figure 4).

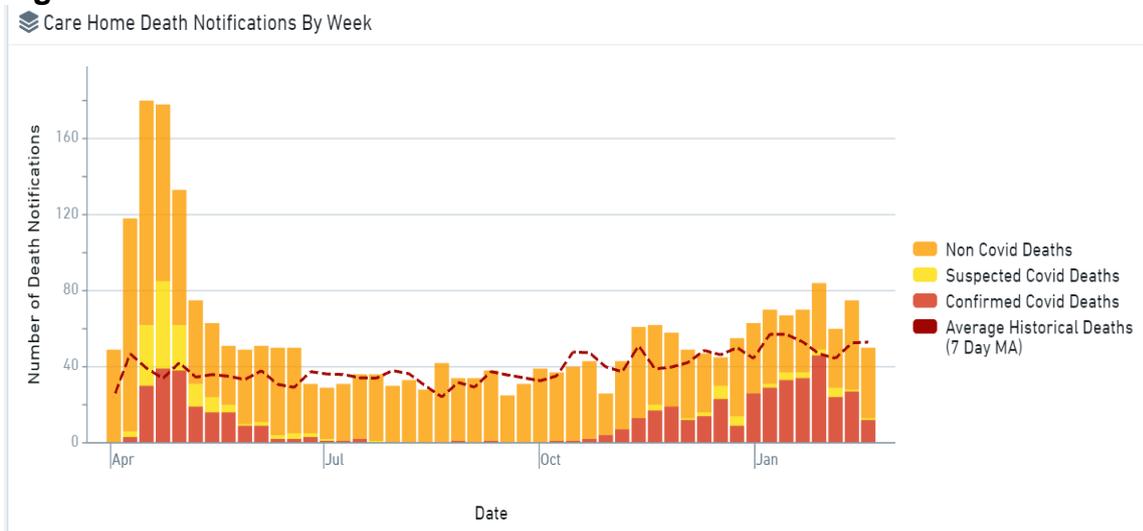
**Figure 4a: care home COVID cases**



**Figure 4b: care home COVID incidents and outbreaks**



**Figure 4c: care home deaths**



15. However, there will be an ongoing impact from COVID-19 - including:
- a. A requirement for enhanced infection prevention and control. This will particularly affect older care homes where the estate is not conducive to the highest standards.
  - b. Ongoing sporadic cases and the occasional outbreak, requiring management and support from the Council
  - c. Ongoing requirements for testing of staff and residents, and probably revaccination, perhaps annually.
  - d. A compounding effect on already difficult recruitment and retention.
  - e. Lower bed occupancy in care homes: vacancy rates have increased from 9% pre pandemic to 22% currently, and demand may reduce as care homes become a less attractive option for long term care.
  - f. A potential change in self-funders' preference for moving to care homes rather than remaining in their own homes.
  - g. Conversely demand for care at home may increase as people choose to stay in their own homes for longer.
16. Collectively these will tend to increase operating costs and reduce income, which may threaten the financial viability of some care homes. The Council will need to consider our response in light of our responsibilities to shape the market, increase quality and ensure cost-effective use of taxpayer funding, as well as the limits on the funding available.
17. Once the immediate impact of COVID-19 has abated the intention is to remodel projections of demand over the next 10 years and review the strategic approach to the market. This will be set out in an updated market position statement to be published in Spring / Summer 2021.

### **Link to Strategic Plan**

18. Inspire healthy independent living.

### **Link to Other Overview and Scrutiny Activity**

19. Reports relating to Care Homes have been presented to Staffordshire County Council Cabinet as per the list below.

### **Community Impact**

N/A

## List of Background Documents/Appendices:

Strategic Review of the Older People Care Home Market in Staffordshire.

Staffordshire County Council Cabinet – 17 April 2019

Block Booked Short Term Care Home Beds. Staffordshire County Council Cabinet – 17 April 2019

Development of Council Owned Older People's Nursing Homes. Staffordshire County Council Cabinet – 19 June 2019

Business Case for Council Owned New Build Care Homes with Nursing. Staffordshire County Council Cabinet – 18 September 2019

Care Provider Fee Uplift and Financial Stability Measures 2020/21. Staffordshire County Council Cabinet – 15 April 2020

Strategic Review of the Older People Care Home Market in Staffordshire.

Staffordshire County Council Cabinet – 16 September 2020

## Contact Details

**Assistant Director:** Andrew Jepps, Assistant Director for Care Commissioning

**Report Author:** Helen Trousdale

**Job Title:** Lead Commissioner, older people

**Telephone No.:** 01785 277008

**E-Mail Address:** [helen.trousdale@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:helen.trousdale@staffordshire.gov.uk)