

REPORT TO: Health & Wellbeing Board

DATE: 8th October 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Jane Sanderson, Deputy Head of Quality & Safety Improvement, Cheshire & Merseyside ICB - Halton & Warrington Places

PORTFOLIO: Adult Social Care

SUBJECT: Halton Care Home Development Group

WARD(S) All

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report aims to update the Health and Wellbeing Board on the work and progress of the Halton Care Home Development Group over the past 18 months, and to provide an overview of forthcoming plans.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION:

RECOMMENDED: That the report and associated appendix be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Care Home Development Group was established to promote a collaborative, system-wide approach to enhancing the care and support provided to individuals residing in care homes across Halton. The group aims to ensure alignment and coordination of initiatives across health, social care, and other key partners. Its focus is on improving standards within the local care home sector by:
- Facilitating joint working across agencies.
 - Supporting the implementation of best practices.
 - Driving quality improvement projects.
 - Ensuring consistent and person-centred care delivery.
- 3.2 By working together, the group seeks to create a more integrated and effective support system for care home residents, to improve outcomes and experiences.
- 3.3 The following points provide an overview of some of the key initiatives and developments overseen by the Care Home Development Group aimed at supporting care homes staff to improve resident health and wellbeing needs.

- 3.4 Through collaboration with the Halton Health Improvement Team, opportunities identified within the Wellbeing Action Plan have been explored to support improved health outcomes and enhance the quality of life for care home residents. This work has focused particularly on addressing frailty, loneliness, and isolation. The development of targeted health and wellbeing training resources has further supported care home teams in delivering more person-centred care.
- 3.5 Utilising the Care Home Provider Forum, service leads have presented to care home teams, with the aim to raise awareness, improve networks and access to appropriate wraparound care, delivered at the right time and in the right place, to help prevent unnecessary hospital transfers, these include the HICAFS, Urgent Response Service and Later Life and Memory Service.
- 3.6 In addition, and to compliment wider efforts to ensure care homes are well supported to deliver integrated care, resources have been developed by the General Practice Care Home LES Development Group to clearly outline key contacts for primary care services, including those within Primary Care Networks (PCNs). This aims to improve clarity around roles and responsibilities, support timely and effective communication and enhance coordination of care for residents.
- 3.7 An ongoing programme of work focused on medicines management quality reviews is continuing across all care homes, including specialist service homes, to consider medication safety concerns, reduce associated risks, and minimise waste. Working alongside Health Improvement Team to support falls prevention, the Medicines Management Team have delivered the Halton Hydration Project which offered co-delivery, by multiple clinical specialisms, of hydration masterclass training to convey prevention messages to care home staff teams.
- 3.8 Halton In-House Homes have introduced an electronic care management system designed to enhance communication and information sharing between health and social care partners, supporting more integrated and efficient care delivery.
- 3.9 The implementation of a Trusted Assessor role is supporting care homes and prospective residents in accessing the most appropriate place of care, ensuring a smooth and positive experience during the transfer process.
- 3.10 The All Age Continuing Care Team has implemented a Digital Referral Portal, which has improved the efficiency, accessibility, and security for Continuing Health Care (CHC) and Funded Nursing Care (FNC) referrals, and requests for enhanced observations. Care Homes providers received focused education and training as part of

this initiative.

- 3.11 In partnership with NHSE and Chester University, qualified nurses working in social care settings have benefited from continued professional development opportunities through the OSCA-Social project. This short-term funded initiative created accessible learning environments to help participants develop procedural and clinical skills aligned with regulatory standards. Training was delivered via an onsite mobile training unit, offering simulation-based practice, education, and assessment to enhance existing clinical competencies.
- 3.12 The establishment of an Integrated Information Sharing Group has created a valuable platform for system partners to exchange information and identify themes and opportunities for quality improvement which are fed back to the Care Home Development Group to collaborate and explore actions in response.
- 3.13 A Clinical Peer Group has been established for registered nurses working across the Halton care homes across inhouse and independent homes. This group provides a valuable platform for sharing best practice, peer learning, and influencing broader quality improvement initiatives.
- 3.14 Working in collaboration with the Halton Palliative and End of Life Locality Group, care home staff are recognised as key partners in supporting residents to achieve their end-of-life care preferences. Staff have been offered access to Mayfly Training, which equips the workforce with essential knowledge and communication skills to support residents in understanding the messages and principles of Advanced Care Planning and reinforcing the importance of personalised and compassionate care. This also strengthens networks between care homes and subject matter experts through improving links with the hospice and palliative care services.
- 3.15 The Care Home Dementia Group was established with the aim of reviewing the current Halton Dementia Strategy and identifying opportunities to enhance the support and services available within care homes. As part of this work, care home staff have received education from specialist dementia leads on key topics such as delirium. Additionally, a dementia quality audit tool has been developed to help care homes assess their own learning needs and identify areas for improvement.
- 3.16 A review of the Care Home Development Group Action Plan is currently underway, with a continued emphasis on health improvement initiatives to support care home residents in optimising their health and wellbeing.
- 3.17 A key priority of the group is to formally recognise the strong commitment of care home teams in caring and supporting our resident

population, through a celebration event of the care home sector. This will provide opportunities to acknowledge staff and the care they deliver but also strengthen engagement to inform our areas of focus and next steps.

3.18 Central to the reviewed action plan will be the integration of recommendations from the recently published Capacity Report: *Transforming Workforce and Quality in Residential Nursing Care Homes in the Borough*. The report outlines strategic actions designed to address key challenges within the sector, strengthen workforce retention and drive long-term transformation across the care home sector.

3.19 As an example of how a more integrated and effective support system for care homes can impact positively and improve outcomes and experiences of care home residents, attached (**Appendix 1**) a case study outlining the journey undertaken at Millbrow which resulted in a CQC rating of good during the summer.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

The work of the group aims to improve the quality of care, improve well being and health provided to residents who reside in care homes

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy NA

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families N/A

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need Ensuring that residents who reside in care homes have equitable access to support available across Halton.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future N/A

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community Residents who reside in our care homes are an integral part of the community of Halton.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Not applicable.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Not applicable.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None identified.

**10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

10.1 None under the meaning of the Act.