

Health & Care

Together

Spring 2022 | Issue 2

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And more!



Tackling isolation one haircut at a time



Putting patients and all we serve at the heart of all we do

How health and social care staff across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland are working together.

Welcome to the second edition of Health and Care Together, our quarterly e-zine for health and care staff in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland - as well as anyone else interested in the transformative changes that are bringing partners and our work closer together.

I'm pleased to say that the feedback from our inaugural issue has been overwhelmingly positive. We are extremely grateful for that, and our aim is to continue showcasing examples of our emerging Integrated Care System in action.

At its heart our purpose is incredibly simple. We want to think and work in different ways to what might have been the case over the last 20 years or so. The challenge we've set ourselves is to put the interests of patients and those we serve at the heart of all we do, and ensure that services wrap round them in ways that stretch beyond traditional organisational boundaries. We also want to empower organisations to work collaboratively with local communities to deliver even better outcomes and tackle the health inequalities that too many face.

In this issue there are yet more great examples of these principles in practice and how schemes big and small are making a real, tangible difference for patients. You can read about how the system invested extra money in social care to maintain staffing numbers over the difficult winter period to help reduce pressure on urgent and emergency services, as well as how one particular community group is playing a key role in reducing isolation and improving health.

You can also find out more about the approach we've taken to work within local communities to overcome hesitancy to the covid vaccine, and how eye care is being delivered closer to home thanks to an innovative partnership with high street optometrists to reduce strain on GPs and A&E. There's also a look at how system partners have worked together to transform services for those with learning



David Sissling

Independent Chair,
Leicester, Leicestershire
and Rutland ICS

disabilities – reducing the number of long term hospital patients by 25%.

We hope you find them interesting, and they help you to get a sense of what our developing ICS is all about. If you want to find out more about the ICS you can also visit <https://www.leicesterccg.nhs.uk/about-us/leicester-leicestershire-and-rutland-integrated-care-board/>. And, as ever, we would love to hear your examples of other work that lives and breathes these values so we can showcase them too. You can send your suggestions to the email address on the back cover. ●

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Future editions

If you and your team have a story to tell about the health and wellbeing partnership across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, email us at llrcgs.corporatecomms@nhs.net

Free mental health and wellbeing support for all staff

Did you know that we have an LLR Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing hub which offers confidential and free of charge support for all health, emergency services and social care staff in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland?

Helpline

Staff can contact the hub's helpline:

Tel: 0116 2544388

Email: mhwb.hub@nhs.net

Visit the hub website for access to a wide range of advice and support:

www.llrstaffwellbeing.org

Lonely and isolated people living in Leicester have been given a boost thanks to a new wellbeing initiative



Tackling isolation one haircut at a time

Run by city-based charity The Centre Project, and supported by funding from the local NHS, the scheme has helped to tackle health inequalities as well as boosting the self-esteem of those who have taken part.

The Centre Project provides a regular drop-in service and it was as part of this that they provided free haircuts, eye tests and health checks to their regulars.

Eric Waweru, Director at The Centre Project, said: "We are a safe space for people to drop in, reducing isolation and enabling people to get the support they need at the critical moment."

"For some of them they are on the verge of needing more serious help, but we can often stop this from happening and prevent them from needing emergency services. We sit with them and talk to them to ensure that people feel safe, supported and able to get the help they need from other services."

Lucy has been involved with the Project for three years. She said: "I first accessed the service through the food bank and began to get involved in their arts and crafts and cookery sessions. I got on well with the staff and really felt the benefit of getting out and about again, because as a single mum of two, I had become quite isolated and down during the pandemic."

Lucy now volunteers at The Project, keen to give back, help others in her community and build her confidence and skills to one day get back into paid employment. "Helping people has really helped me too. I've

learned so much and I'm really grateful to their team for helping me get back on my feet," she added.

Using £7,000 funding from the local NHS, and working alongside local businesses who donated their time for free, the charity was able to run a number of activities to help boost the morale and wellbeing of the people they support. It also helped people enrol with a local GP.

This included a trip to Birmingham Christmas Market and a post-Christmas food parcel, as well as the free haircuts, eye checks and a 'know your numbers' check, designed to help people understand how they can look after their health to stop developing Type 2 diabetes.

Eric said: "Some people may not be looking after themselves that well. It's about making people feel good about themselves. It helps people to think 'I can do this. I can take care of myself' - with support to achieve this."

Steve McCue, senior strategic development manager for LLR CCGs, said: "We have worked with The Centre Project over a number of years on various projects and we know that they have the ability to engage and connect with under-served populations in a way that we can't."

"Voluntary and community organisations like this also play a key role in helping keep people well-supported and in good health, which can be a really powerful way of reducing over reliance on urgent and emergency care." ●

"We are a safe space for people to drop in, reducing isolation and enabling people to get the support they need at the critical moment"



Eric Waweru

Director, Centre Project

"Helping people has really helped me too. I've learned so much and I'm really grateful to their team for helping me get back on my feet"



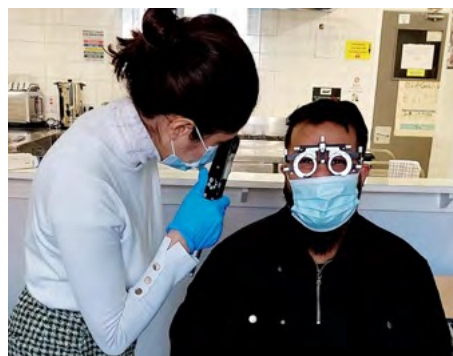
Lucy
Volunteer

"Voluntary and community organisations play a key role in helping keep people in good health, which can reduce over reliance on urgent and emergency care"



Steve McCue

Senior strategic development manager for LLR CCGs



A cash injection from the health service helped to prevent a care crisis last Christmas.



How NHS funding helped prevent a Christmas care crisis

Money from the NHS was used to fund two initiatives, designed to mitigate staff shortages in the run-up to the festive season – a cash bonus for staff who agreed to work over the Christmas and New Year period, and an earlier-than-planned introduction of the revised National Living Wage.

Fay Bayliss, Deputy Director of Integration and Transformation for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Clinical Commissioning Groups explained: “There were huge pressures on the system already due to Covid, which were exacerbated by the Government announcement that all care workers had to be vaccinated.

“That, combined with the fact that a number of large organisations locally, particularly in the hospitality and retail industries, were offering golden handshakes to people to come and work with them over the Christmas period, meant that there was a real threat that our already really pressured social care workforce would be further depleted.”

At one point in the weeks before Christmas 60% of care homes were declaring Covid outbreaks. Getting patients out of hospital and into appropriate care settings was becoming increasingly difficult, lead-



Kate Galoppi
Head of Commissioning
for Adult Social Care at
Leicester City Council

“This extra funding has had a huge impact. Being able to reward staff and recognise their commitment at a difficult time made them feel so valued. We had really positive feedback.”

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ing to huge pressure on beds and reducing the number available to new patients needing a hospital admission.

“It was all having a huge impact on the operational resilience of the health and social care system,” Fay said. “We knew we had to prioritise patient outcomes, patient experience and clinical safety by ensuring resilience within the workforce.”

Using non-recurrent funding from NHS England, the CCGs were able to fund the initiatives in the care sector– the first time money has been used in this way across the LLR system.

Kate Galoppi, Head of Commissioning for Adult Social Care at Leicester City Council, said: “This extra funding has had a huge impact. Being able to reward staff and recognise their commitment at a difficult time made them feel so valued. We had really positive feedback.

“The knock-on effect has been far fewer staff absences, so our care homes have been able to operate fully, with no reduction in services and/or impact on hospitals. The number of people waiting for homecare has gone down significantly too, which is fantastic as it means more people have been able to get the care they need, where and when they need it.” ●

Helping more people with learning disabilities live happy, fulfilling lives, closer to their families and carers.



New ways of transforming the lives of those with learning disabilities

A transformation of the Learning Disability Service across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland is changing the lives of hundreds of patients.

Judged as failing by regulators in 2020, the service is now in the top third for performance in the country, helping more people with learning disabilities live happy, fulfilling lives, closer to their families and carers.

By combining local authorities, NHS providers and commissioners into one team, the service has been able to break down barriers and provide the people they care for with a much more seamless, flexible service.

It has reduced the number of long-term learning disability hospital patients by 25%, boosted the amount of supported accommodation in the area, and is working towards ensuring all patients with learning disabilities receive an annual health check with their GP.

In the last year 53 people have successfully left hospital, many of whom were in facilities far from home and had been there for several years.

Colin Moore is among those who have been helped to find supported accommodation. He said: "Having my own apartment proves to me that I am well again and will be ready to go back into the community and live an independent and happy life. Having my own set of keys to my own apartment shows me that I can realise my true potential and is symbolic of how well I have become."

One of the team's other successes has been an initiative to increase uptake of the Covid vaccine among those with learning disabilities.

Laura Smith, Group Service Manager, said: "People with learning disabilities are seven times more likely to die from Covid than the rest of the population. We held a number of specialist clinics where people could be supported to have their jab in an environment that felt safe and comfortable for them. The team did some really creative things to support people to get their vaccinations – we even had spiderman at some of the sessions!"

Teenager Louis Brewin, of Broughton Ashtley, was one of those who benefited. The 15-year-old, who is deaf and has learning disabilities, had his booster jab at one of the dedicated clinics.

His mum Emily said: "It made such a difference to him to be seen in that environment, with no big queues and without lots of people coming and going. The staff could see that he was anxious and within about 30 seconds we were being dealt with."

"Their distraction techniques were so brilliant that Louis didn't even realise he'd had the jab, and he was very proud of the certificate he was given afterwards."

Mark Roberts, Assistant Director at Leicester Partnership Trust, says this is a prime example of how working together on seemingly small issues can make a huge difference to the individual. He added: "People are working more effectively together as a collaborative service. We've shifted from a tennis match set up where you had groups of people on each side passing things from one to the other, to one where we are all on the same team." ●



Louis Brewin



"The team did some really creative things to support people to get their vaccinations – we even had spiderman at some of the sessions"

Laura Smith, Group Service Manager



Hyper local outreach is helping the most vulnerable get protected

A new approach to reaching the most diverse and hard to reach communities with Covid vaccines is helping save lives.

Voluntary and community organisations, the NHS, local councils and even the fire service, have been working hand in hand for several months, using their local knowledge to reach out to those most in need of protection against the virus.

This includes those at a higher risk due to poor health, people who don't access mainstream services due to language or cultural barriers, vulnerable or isolated people, and those who may be reluctant or unable to access a vaccination centre.

Using localised vaccine uptake data and community health information, the partnership team has been able to target hyper local areas with a package of support and advice through door to door leafleting and conversations, via community-based staff and mobile vaccination units held in community centres and supermarkets.

Leah Chilengwe, LLR Vaccine Inequality Lead, said: "The strong partnership we have with the voluntary and community sector who work with people on a daily basis, means we have been able to directly reach more of the people most at risk from Covid."

"Our success comes from understanding people's worries, concerns and practical barriers, and engaging with them where they feel most comfortable."

A whole spectrum of people have benefited from the partnership approach, from fearful teenagers to busy parents:



"The strong partnership we have with the voluntary and community sector who work with people on a daily basis, means we have been able to directly reach more of the people most at risk from Covid."

Leah Chilengwe,
LLR Vaccine Inequality Lead

- A previous anti-vaxer who was hospitalised with Covid and regretted not getting the jab. She was still wary and hadn't taken any action, but saw the mobile unit as she visited her local supermarket and decided to go for it.
- The team has been working with Eastern European community leaders to answer questions and allay fears as they often don't take up the vaccinations due to cultural reasons.
- Four people who didn't speak English were vaccinated for the first time at their local supermarket with support from telephone interpreting services. The first person told their friends and a further three came along later.
- A parent with two teenagers at a shopping centre, one with a learning disability and one who was shaking with fear, thought there was little chance that one would be vaccinated, let alone both. They were placed in a screened off booth and with gentle conversation both proceeded.
- An HGV driver who had struggled to get the vaccine due to work commitments thought the mobile unit was ideal as he was able to get it while shopping at his supermarket.

"Taking our mobile unit out to people where they live has given them a quick and convenient way to get protected and their feedback has been resoundingly positive."

"It really goes to show just how effective partnership working can be, which we know will only continue to go from strength to strength in the future too," Leah added. ●



Eyecare closer to home

Patients with minor eye conditions can now be seen in their local high street opticians, avoiding a trip to hospital.

The new Minor Eye Care Service, which launched in May 2020, means patients can be seen by specially-trained optometrists closer to their own homes.

It can be used by people with a range of common eye conditions, such as redness, soreness, itchiness or who feel that something is stuck in their eye.

Helen Mather, Diagnostic Commissioning Lead for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland's Clinical Commissioning Groups, said: "We've trained up a number of high-street optometrists across the area so that people can be seen and treated much more quickly."

"Previously these people might have ended up at their GP, who would most probably have referred them elsewhere anyway, or at eye casualty."

"The new service means people don't need to attend hospital and can be seen much closer to their own homes."

They can also self-refer by calling 0116 326 5588 from 9am-5pm Monday-Friday, or from 9am-12:30pm at weekends and Bank Holidays.

Following the success of this service, a new glaucoma service has since been launched. From November 2021 onwards patients with glaucoma, whose condition is stable, have been able to see high-street optometrist for their routine checks. They will only be referred back into the hospital system if their condition changes.

Helen said: "The outpatients clinics at our hospitals were often huge and people would often have to sit in a crowded waiting room. This takes away all that hassle and means they can avoid going anywhere near the hospital, something which has become ever more appealing to people since the pandemic began."

"We're now able to provide people with a more timely service, closer to home and use our workforce more sensibly." ●



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Helen Mather
Diagnostic Commissioning
Lead for Leicester.

Patients are referred to the high street service by 111 or by their local optician or pharmacist.

They can also self-refer by calling 0116 326 5588



Joining forces to combat Omicron

Staff from across the health and social care system have been praised as they united to combat the potential threat of Omicron throughout the crucial winter months.

With the new, more virulent strain starting to emerge in the Autumn of 2020 and into the winter months, on top of already going above and beyond in the previous months, it was feared that a combination of physical and mental exhaustion, COVID ill-health, isolation policies, plus a new wave of seriously ill people would have a major impact on the ability of services to deliver care in the area.

Louise Young said: "In any normal (usual) week during COVID we were planning for 7-12% of staff to be absent due to sickness, as we started to mobilise in some parts of our system it was 22% with thousands sick or isolating. Some of our modelling was even preparing for up to 40-50% staff sickness and absence. "It was clear we had to issue a call to arms."

The Leicestershire Resilience Forum (a multi-agency group of organisations who plan for any incidents which might affect people's wellbeing) declared a major incident due to the predicted increase in COVID-19 cases and impact on staff absence.

"We asked willing and able staff to support Trusts and care homes for activities such as hospitality, driving and ward runners. Many had already volunteered to

support the vaccination programme which was a huge success. By working together, organisations released staff who could support on frontline.

In the end, given the success of the vaccination programme and staff's perseverance, the worst case scenarios were not reach but the 'mutual aid' programme saw 14 staff support hospital wards and another three in maternity roles, plus a further identified if require for our community Trust. We took a truly collective approach to this, ensuring a level of training was received by all staff deployed and regular check-ins during their deployment.

LLR is now taking the learning from this, together with other initiatives and is currently establishing a reservist model for the health and care system, in preparation for major staffing crises and in readiness for winter. ●



"...Some of our modelling was even preparing for up to 40-50% staff sickness and absence."

"It was clear we had to issue a call to arms."

Louise Young

Assistant Director Strategic Workforce Partnerships and Programmes



"It was great to see how hard the staff work and how professional they are. The ward staff were grateful for my help and many people said 'thank you'"

"This opportunity should be maintained and offered out to non-hospital based staff at the NHS. For those (like me) it will provide a practical experience and help them to better appreciate the people who we look after."

"When there are future emergencies, there is a ready set of staff who can step in and support the hospitals."

Omicron volunteer

The health and wellbeing partnership for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.



Leicester City Clinical Commissioning Group
West Leicestershire Clinical Commissioning Group
East Leicestershire and Rutland Clinical Commissioning Group



Leicester
City Council



University Hospitals
of Leicester
NHS Trust



Leicestershire
County Council



Leicestershire Partnership
NHS Trust



Rutland
County Council