

SUNDERLAND CARERS' MANAGEMENT BOARD (CMB)
MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 7th OCTOBER 2020

SUMMARY OF MAIN POINTS

1. Virtual meeting

No meetings had been held since 8 January 2020, the meetings scheduled for April and July 2020 having been cancelled due to the Covid-19 restrictions. To keep in touch with events during the crisis, a virtual meeting took place, using the Microsoft Teams software.

2. Update from Chief Operating Officer of SCAS

Graham King, Chief Operating Officer of SCAS, updated the meeting on the events of recent months during the time when CMB meetings had not been possible.

Covid-19 related

- The Covid-19 pandemic had presented some difficult challenges, not least being the procurement of sufficient PPE equipment and the maintenance of minimum staffing levels
- Short break and day services had closed temporarily but were now back in operation
- Staff absence was now at a much lower and manageable level
- Some residents had tested positive and the fact that infection rates were rising throughout the city presented an ongoing risk
- Increase use of technology had assisted with communications during lockdown

Other matters

- A new contract had been agreed by the Council for 5 years with the possibility of a 2 year extension
- The Company's much improved position reflected the huge effort over the last few years to restructure and stabilise the services, and this was recognised and appreciated by members
- The increased costs in dealing with the pandemic had been absorbed within existing budgets as payments were based on contract value, allowing flexibility in use of resources
- The current CQC assessment of the Supported Living and Community Involvement services was 'Good' compared to the previous rating of 'Requires Improvement'; the Company was aiming for 'Outstanding' over the life of the new contract
- A programme of decoration of homes and replacement of kitchen appliances was underway with a small team of employees with trade skills undertaking much of the work

3. Points and queries raised by carers

- Clarification was given of the procedures which applied if a member of staff tested positive for Covid-19
- The difficulties of being able to visit loved ones in the current situation was discussed, including whether socially distanced space could be provided indoors and the possibility of dealing with individual cases by carrying out risk assessments to provide supplementary guidance and protocols

- The restrictions around Covid-19 exacerbated the existing problems of providing adequate support to residents who needed to go to hospital. In a recent case a paramedic had stated that it would not be possible for staff or relatives to accompany the patient. The dangers inherent in this situation were discussed and Graham King undertook to raise the issue at a multi-disciplinary meeting attended by hospital and ambulance service directors.
- Thanks and appreciation were expressed for the excellent care provided to loved ones by SCAS staff at this most difficult time.

4. Future meetings

Meeting dates were agreed for 2021, all on Wednesdays at 6pm.

13th January

14th April

7th July

6th October

Virtual meetings using Microsoft Teams would continue until it became possible to resume face to face meetings. It was agreed that efforts would be made to improve access to the meetings for members who received their invitations in paper form through the post only. At the same time the Sunderland Carers' Centre would ask family carers to provide email addresses if they so wished, as receipt of meeting invitations by email would make it much easier to join future meetings.