

Report for the Children, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel on Tuesday 14 July 2020

1. Merger of Bath and North east Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire CCGs

The merger of Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire CCGs took place on 1st of April 2020.

The newly merged CCG serves a combined population of 934,000 and will maintain its roots in local communities and continue to be driven by local clinicians from the 94 practices across Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire (BSW).

Dr Andrew Girdher takes on the role of Clinical Chair for BSW CCG, while Dr Ruth Grabham becomes Medical Director. The two lead clinicians will be supported in their Governing Body roles by a range of GPs including three locality clinical chairs, Dr Brynn Bird (B&NES), Dr Amanda Webb (Swindon) and Dr Edd Rendell (Wiltshire) and other healthcare professionals from across the region, all with a unique knowledge of their specific geographical area.

Operating at scale across BSW means strategically commissioning services and reducing variation in care so everyone receives high quality treatment, regardless of where they live.

BSW CCG, as part of the wider BSW STP Partnership, is working towards becoming an Integrated Care System (ICS) by April 2021 and will be assessed by NHS England in November. We anticipate an announcement this month as part of phase three planning guidance that reasserts a commitment to system integration.

Note: The BSW CCG Annual General Meeting will take place on Thursday 10 September 2020. Further details will be shared on our website in due course.

2. Response to coronavirus

As part of our initial response to coronavirus, BSW CCG quickly established an Incident Coordination Centre to oversee our health response to the pandemic.

An organisation-wide response to manage coronavirus was also introduced with new work-stream programme management arrangements to ensure a focus on maintaining critical services.

In BaNES, Swindon and Wiltshire, a Community Response Hub was established to provide a local response to coronavirus and to support community services and care home providers.

With this organisational infrastructure in place, BSW CCG was able to respond to the coronavirus crisis in a number of ways, including the following areas:

- **Primary Care**

BSW CCG provided support to general practices to provide care to more vulnerable and high risk patients in own homes and through supporting their Business Continuity Plans to support resilience. We also provided support to provide improved triage systems, support for a significant increase in remote care and consultations, and help with establishing “hot and cold” sites to treat those with and without coronavirus symptoms.

- **Supporting Care Homes**

BSW CCG worked closely with BaNES Council, our GPs and Virgin Care to provide infection prevention control support to care home and domiciliary care providers during the first period of the coronavirus outbreak and continues to do so. Support provided includes weekly Care Home Review meetings to plan what actions are needed to support homes further, daily phone calls from the Adult Social Care Commissioning Team to check the situation at homes and the progress of infection control measures implemented, regular training and information update webinars and support from local GPs in terms of visits and virtual ward rounds.

- **Elective Care**

Coronavirus had an immediate impact on elective care services. BSW CCG responded through a system of mutual aid from colleagues working for independent sector providers, ensuring patient transport services continued to operate and delivering care to outpatients virtually wherever possible.

- **PPE**

Difficulties accessing crucial PPE was a problem during the early days of the pandemic. In response to this, BSW CCG stepped up a PPE cell to support providers across health and social care. The key responsibilities of this important group included sourcing and purchase of PPE, mutual aid arrangements and ongoing monitoring of stock levels.

- **Medicines Management**

BSW CCG put in place a number of initiatives to support medicines management. We took steps to enable urgent access and appropriate use of end of life medicines so patients requiring these would not experience a delay. Additionally we developed guidance around medication for symptoms associated with coronavirus cases, helping them to be issued only to those who needed them.

- **Working with the voluntary sector**

Voluntary sector group 3SG in partnership with Virgin Care, B&NES Council and BSW CCG set up the Compassionate Community Hub to reach out to the vulnerable and isolated to provide help with food deliveries, medicine, urgent housing, mental health and wellbeing and money matters. To date the hub has received over 5000 calls. 3SG have recruited and managed 2,500 volunteers and over 1,100 tasks have been completed supporting the most vulnerable to help with food shopping, collection of medicines and befriending calls.

3. Reset and recovery of local services post coronavirus

Services across all providers in BSW were significantly scaled back during the start of the coronavirus pandemic, following the government's decision to pause all non-urgent healthcare services and redirect 100 per cent of the NHS's efforts and resources into responding to what was, and still is, an unprecedented challenge.

However, at the end of April 2020, following a sustained period during which the number of confirmed cases of coronavirus continued to fall, Simon Stevens, Chief Executive of NHS England, issued an open letter that requested all NHS systems to use the next six weeks to look at restarting non-urgent activity.

In light of this, and with a look to the future, there is a feeling that the NHS should not simply return to its pre-coronavirus models, but move towards something that encapsulates recent improvements, while also acknowledging the continued need to stay alert to potential future waves of coronavirus and maintain social distancing measure.

With this in mind, work is underway across BSW to find the best approach to restarting, resetting and recovering our services, bearing in mind all of the time, that we need to reassure the public that services are always available for those in need and that services are clean and safe to use.

We will do this through a coordinated communications approach using social media, radio interviews, print and online coverage, videos and paid-for advertising. Working closely with both clinical and commissioner colleagues, the CCG will produce messaging and content specific to cancer, cardiovascular, mental health, maternity and outpatient services.

4. Nightingale hospital

Another part of the local response to coronavirus was the rapid building and opening of a new Nightingale hospital at the University of West of England Frenchay campus in Bristol. The new facility is one of seven across the country.

Work began on the 300 bed facility on 3 April and the unit officially opened less than three weeks later. The extra capacity was put in place so that existing hospitals in BSW and across the whole South West would be able to cope with the anticipated spike in demand while still meeting the needs of existing patients.

Thankfully that peak in demand did not materialise and the hospital was put on stand-by mode at the end of June. It remains ready and waiting to help support our hospitals and resources in case of a second wave of coronavirus.

5. Black Lives Matter response

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement has gained prominence over the past few months and has highlighted the inequalities that exist for Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority Communities, an issue which has become even more important considering the high proportion of members of BAME communities that have been affected and are at increased risk from coronavirus.

BSW CCG has been active in its response to this issue. We were one of a number of organisations across B&NES to pledge support for the campaign via a joint statement alongside Bath & North East Somerset Council, the RUH, Curo, the University of Bath, Bath Spa University and Avon and Somerset Police and Avon Fire and Rescue Service.

The wider BSW Partnership is also working with Directors for Public Health at local authorities to get a better understanding of the impact of coronavirus on health inequalities in local communities.