

Report for the Children, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel on Tuesday 15 September 2020

1. Restarting cancer services as part of the third phase of the NHS response to COVID-19

On 31 July, NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSEI) Chief Executive Sir Simon Stevens and Chief Operating Officer Amanda Pritchard wrote to NHS organisations to outline the third phase of the response to COVID-19 and the NHS's priorities. The focus for this phase is on restoring and recovering services and preparing for winter pressure demands.

Cancer services are one priority area for BSW and plans are in place to restart services through

- Managing down waiting times and continuing to focus on the 62 day pathway and 31 day treatment pathway
- Restarting cancer screening
- Launch of communications campaign to encourage patients to see GP if they have worrying symptoms

2. Reset and recovery of services

As the first wave of infections eased across BSW during May, we began developing and implementing plans for restarting services. We have continued this work building on the lessons learned about the value of joint working across all partners and via a shared commitment to working in an integrated way.

It is important to stress that due to maintaining safe practices aimed at limiting the spread of Covid-19, all health services are running with reduced capacity. This helps us to support social distancing, to ensure sufficient time for cleaning clinical areas after each consultation and for donning/doffing PPE.

As part of continued efforts to increase activity, NHS England /NHS Improvement (NHS E/I) have recently published a letter describing additional actions now required of health services in the nationally-defined Phase 3 response to the Covid-19 pandemic. A full partnership response is encouraged and we are working together with partners to submit final plans to NHS E/I by the end of September 2020.

3. Outpatient transformation development

Although there is work in progress across BSW to transform outpatient services, in B&NES we have developed groups in common to discuss managing patient care sooner during a patient's journey out of the hospital setting. To help with this, we have established groups led by the CCG and B&NES Enhanced Medical Service

(BEMS) looking to support services outside of the Royal United Hospital with the specialist knowledge and resources required to deliver high quality care.

The BSW team will enable the transformation of outpatient services with support around performance analysis, benchmarking and creating efficiencies by sharing resources across the area.

Early attention is being given to the referral support service, advice and guidance measures to the community, and how the system can support community care in delivering work that was previously managed in hospitals.

Longer term goals revolve around supporting and upskilling clinicians working out of hospital as well as outreach services where specialities are working more closely in the community.

There has been a focus on six specialities where there are pathways of work that can be supported to help manage the flow into the RUH and ensure earlier care for the patient. The specialities include cardiology, Ear Nose and Throat, gastroenterology, gynaecology, rheumatology and dermatology.

4. Joint meeting between council and CCG on integrated working to improve population health and wellbeing

Members of the Council's cabinet and senior officers together with senior executives and clinical leaders of the BSW CCG, met recently to discuss a number of issues including current operational and financial challenges.

They also reflected on the recent merger of Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire CCGs and the national NHS drive to create Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) across larger population areas and Integrated Care Alliances (ICAs) at place level, i.e. co-terminus with local authority boundaries. The group felt it was important to establish what this would mean for the long-standing integrated commissioning arrangements in B&NES between the Council and CCG and to ensure they are fit for purpose going forward.

The group discussed that whilst there is no 'right answer' to how we should work together, there was a strong commitment to continue to work closely together and to ensure that we don't lose the benefits that our unique style of close partnership working has brought for local people over many years.

The ICA development may lead us to a different model of integrated working, but it would still have at its heart the shared aim of improving the health, wellbeing and care of the population of Bath and North East Somerset.

5. NHS111 First plans

A BSW group has been established to look at how to implement a Think 111 first programme across the area.

Think 111 First is part of a national integrated programme to improve outcomes and experience of urgent and emergency care. To keep patients safe and allow them to maintain social distancing we are asking them to call NHS 111 before they visit an Emergency Department. NHS 111 will then book them into a time slot at the emergency department, or at the most appropriate local service for the patient.

Think 111 First will benefit local people by:

- Empowering patients to access the full range of services available to meet their needs in the fastest and most convenient way possible
- Improving patient outcomes and safety by ensuring people access the service which matches their needs
- Improving patient experience and safety by reducing crowding within A&E departments and other urgent care facilities.

The group is currently considering how to implement Think 111 First across BSW.

6. Paulton Minor Injuries Unit update

Paulton Minor Injuries unit temporarily closed on April 8th as part of an overall response to Covid so staff could be redeployed to help provide additional capacity in other areas of the local health and care system. The MIU in Paulton had also experienced a 75 percent decline in attendance. At the time, BSW CCG and Virgin Care were at pains to highlight that the closure would be reviewed on an ongoing basis and would be reopened as soon as possible.

Following a period of ongoing assessment, the Minor Injuries Unit at Paulton is now offering a seven day a week service between 10 and 6pm which is accessible to everyone via a telephone triage system. A partial Radiology service will restart from mid-September.

While there is still no walk in facility; ways of working are constantly evolving in order to provide a safe and appropriate service for our community.

7. 2020/21 Flu vaccination programme

Due to the impact of Covid-19, flu planning for 2020/21 started earlier than usual, to prepare for the potential co-circulation of Influenza and Covid-19 and to reduce the potential risk of health services being overwhelmed by outbreaks.

In the light of health inequalities highlighted by the impact of Covid-19, this year's flu planning aims to reduce the risk of further disadvantaging the most vulnerable groups and maximise coverage.

The 2020/21 flu immunisation programme has expanded the groups of people who will be eligible for a vaccination and set high expectations for vaccination uptake figures across all those eligible groups.

In addition to previous eligible groups – adults aged over 65 years, pregnant women, all primary school aged children, children aged 2 and 3 years, carers, health and social care staff and individuals at clinical risk – this year's vaccination programme will also include:

- children in Year 7
- people on the shielded list and their household
- people aged 50 to 64 years, who will be invited later in the vaccination programme – Nov/Dec – as part of a 'phased approach'.

8. Don't wait and worry cancer and mental health radio campaign

BSW CCG has launched a new communications campaign to encourage people to get help early if they have worrying symptoms and have been put off visiting their doctor because of coronavirus.

The campaign is designed to address a concerning decline in cancer referrals from primary care, and low uptake of screening appointments in secondary care due to a change in behaviour from patients as a result of concerns related to Covid 19.

The *Don't wait and worry – we're here for you campaign* focuses on cancer and mental health as part of a bigger campaign to inform the public that services are open and safe.

The campaign launched at the end of August and makes use of radio advertising as a way of reaching a wide audience and targeting groups who do not have good access to the internet or regularly use social media.

The campaign has also been widely reported in local newspapers and featured on BBC TV's Points West programme.