

Report for the Children, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel on Tuesday 19 January 2021

1. Covid mass vaccination programme

December saw the start of the roll out of the coronavirus vaccination programme in Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire. Initially a local vaccination centre was set up in Sulis Manor Road Surgery in Coombe Down with vaccinations coordinated by GP Federation BEMS.

Vaccinations have been under way in our area since before Christmas and, to date, more than 35,00 people across Bath and North East Somerset have received the lifesaving vaccine thanks to the hard work and dedication of colleagues working across the area.

Those vaccinated already include those over 80, front line healthcare workers, care home staff and residents.

During the week commencing 4th of January, additional sites began to offer the vaccine at Batheaston Medical Centre and the Somer Centre in Midsomer Norton.

A central vaccination centre was opened at the Bath Pavilion on 12th of January and a further site at West View Surgery in Keynsham on the 14th January.

The vaccine will be rolled out to further prioritised cohorts of people under the guidance of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

Priority groups are as follows:

1. Residents in a care home for older adults and staff working in care homes for older adults
2. All those 80 years of age and over and frontline health and social care workers
3. All those 75 years of age and over
4. All those 70 years of age and over and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals (not including pregnant women and those under 16 years of age)
5. All those 65 years of age and over
6. Adults aged 16 to 65 years in an at-risk group (see below)
7. All those 60 years of age and over
8. All those 55 years of age and over
9. All those 50 years of age and over

In the meantime, it is really important that people living in BaNES wait for their invitation from their GP practice to have the vaccination rather than calling their local practice or visiting to try to book an appointment.

Moving forward, there will be a national booking system rolled out for the remaining cohorts of our community particularly those under 50, and this will offer flexibility of site to receive the vaccine.

We would very much value your support in helping to reassure any concerned residents who are worried about potentially being missed off the vaccine list, that as soon as it is their turn to be vaccinated, they will receive details of their appointment either by phone or letter.

Should you or any resident have a specific vaccine-related question, please feel free to get in touch via our new dedicated vaccine mailbox, which can be reached by sending an email to bswccg.vaccinequery@nhs.net.

2. Temporary closure of Paulton Minor Injuries Unit and wider system pressures

The health and care system across Bath and North east Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire is experiencing extreme pressure as a result of the rapidly rising number of patients needing treatment for Covid-19, in addition to the usual pressures connected to more general winter related illnesses and high levels of staff sickness.

As a result of this, the Minor Injury Units (MIUs) at Paulton Hospital and Trowbridge Community Hospital will be closed on a temporary basis so staff can be redeployed to provide vital additional capacity elsewhere in the local area.

Similar plans were put in place during the first national lockdown with MIUs closing in April, before a gradual reopening for appointments only from August onwards.

It is important to highlight that the closure of these MIU is a temporary measure and the decision will be reviewed on an ongoing basis with a view to reopening the units as soon as it is feasible and sustainable to do so.

In the meantime, patients with minor injuries should visit the NHS 111 online service. This will provide advice on where to go for the best care for their symptoms. People should only phone 111 if they cannot access the 111 online service.

Those patients who feel that they need a GP appointment should call their local GP practice and are likely to be offered a phone or video consultation in the first instance, unless a face-to-face appointment is absolutely necessary.

3. Integrated Care System Designation

In December health and care organisations in Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire (BSW) were confirmed by NHS England and Improvement as meeting the criteria to become an Integrated Care System.

An Integrated Care System (ICS) is a way of working across health and care organisations that allows them to work closer together to take collective responsibility for managing resources, delivering care and improving the health and wellbeing of the population they serve.

The ICSs will integrate:

- primary and specialist care
- physical and mental health services
- health and social care.

Across BSW, hospitals, GP surgeries, community care providers, local authorities, a mental health trust, an ambulance trust and voluntary sector organisations have been working together since 2016 as part of the BSW Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP).

Working together as the new BSW Partnership, health and care partners will prioritise issues that matter to local communities as well as managing health and care provision during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

The BSW Partnership is also responsible for setting the strategy and goals for improving health and care in the area and overseeing the quality and safety, decision making, governance and financial management of health and care services. It will also provide clinical and professional leadership for the whole area. We are currently in the process of creating a new website for our new ICS.

For more information, visit www.bswstp.nhs.uk.

4. Home oximetry monitoring service

Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire CCG has launched a new service across the area designed to enable clinically vulnerable patients with Covid-19 who are isolating at home to measure their own oxygen levels and send data into local hospitals.

If clinicians spot any early warning signs in terms of low blood oxygen levels – which can lead to complications and poor outcomes – the patient can then be admitted to hospital where they can receive treatment.

The remote home oximetry service has been developed through collaboration between a number of health and care partners including hospitals, Medvivo and the West of England Academic Health Science Network.

The new approach will allow clinicians to identify patients at home who are likely to deteriorate and quickly treat them and is potentially lifesaving.

The scheme is now live and more than 8000 home oximetry blood oxygen level measuring devices are available for use.

5. Long Covid service

GP Surgeries, hospitals and community health and care provider Medvivo have been working together to create a dedicated service for people affected by a condition known as Long Covid.

The condition, which is thought to affect more than 60,000 people in the UK, can cause continuing fatigue, 'brain fog', breathlessness and pain.

The service, which was launched on 1 December, includes a virtual assessment clinic, diagnostics and an onward referral pathway.

The service will also provide self-help options with input from the third sector and from those who have been affected by the condition.

While the new local service is designed to help all people who believe their current health condition is a result of an earlier coronavirus diagnosis, patients are not able to self-refer and will need to access support through a referral from a named healthcare professional.

6. NHS 111 First

A new national initiative encouraging people to contact NHS 111 before travelling to hospital or minor injuries treatment units when seeking urgent and emergency care was launched across Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire on December 1st.

The new Think 111 First campaign asks people in need of urgent health care to contact NHS 111, either online or by phone, so they can be directed to the most appropriate healthcare service.

People with very serious or life-threatening health conditions, such as chest pain, severe bleeding or loss of consciousness, will still continue to phone 999.

By contacting NHS 111 first, people can be assured they are being referred to the right help for their condition, which might be to see their GP or pharmacist, or to go to an urgent treatment centre.

This will not only help patients to be seen quicker, but will also reduce unnecessary visits to some of the region's busiest healthcare facilities.

In situations where people contacting NHS 111 do need urgent or emergency care, a timed arrival slot will be arranged at the nearest minor injuries unit or, in some cases, at the nearest hospital emergency department.

Trials of the Think 111 initiative across the country have produced positive results, including a drop in the number of people going to emergency departments.

Getting Think 111 First up and running across BaNES, Swindon and Wiltshire has been a complex project, which has involved close and collaborative working from all parts of the health and care system.

We don't have a full data set yet on the impact of Think 111 First, but anecdotally, patients and staff like the system. Our enhanced MCAS which is staffed by ED specialists consistently delivers a more than 75 per cent reduction in patients turning up at an ED following an ED disposition as a result of calling 111.

7. Citizens panel update

BSW CCG's Our Health Our Future citizen's engagement panel has continued to engage with those living in BSW to get their views on health and care issues.

In line with our value of "inclusive", the online panel is made up of a representative sample of the population from across our region. Panel members take part in regular surveys throughout the year as well as form focus groups.

The latest survey was carried out in November and published at the beginning of December. The new survey looks at public views on the coronavirus vaccine, sharing personal health and care records digitally and the NHS 111 service (though not the new NHS 111 First initiative).

You can read the survey here: <https://www.bswccg.nhs.uk/docs-reports/1636-bsw-ohof-panel-survey-4-results-december-2020/file>

We continue to recruit new members through public facing events and sharing the findings of our surveys through a new public facing newsletter which is available to read here: <https://www.bswccg.nhs.uk/news-events/newsletters>