

1. Current pressures on local health and care system

The health and care system in Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire has been under enormous pressure over the last few months as omicron cases across our region rise and staff at our acute hospitals and other care settings stay off work either because of Covid or the need to isolate.

In Bath and North East Somerset, the Royal United Hospital recently declared an Internal Critical Incident over increasing pressures caused by staff sicknesses, treating Covid and non-Covid patients and the availability of beds.

Although this has now been stood down and things at the hospital are more stable, the position is still challenging and a number of initiatives are underway to alleviate pressure and help with flow through the hospital by discharging patients who are well enough to go home.

A number of options are under review including using a community ward at St Martin's hospital to accommodate patients, looking to utilise different areas of the RUH to accommodate more beds and setting up a temporary care facility at a hotel in central Bath (see below).

Pressures are also still being felt in our community services and in primary care where staff absences due to covid continue to cause problems.

We have issued numerous appeals to the public to support services during this difficult time, and will continue to do so, the main messages being for people to use our health services appropriately, support hospitals by collecting loved ones as soon as they are ready to go home, using our pharmacies for help and support wherever possible and using the online 111 service in the first instance.

2. New community based Paediatric Urgent Service Hub

A new community based Paediatric Urgent Service Hub (PUSH) has been established in in BaNES in order to help reduce pressures on both primary & secondary care.

The service has been set up by local GP Federation BaNES Enhanced Medical Services (BEMS) and is for children up to the age of 5 with symptoms of fever and who are acutely unwell and need a face-to-face review.

The service will run from two sites, St James's Surgery and Elm Hayes in Paulton, and will run Monday to Friday, initially for afternoons only between 1pm-6pm with a view to running a morning session too from 8am-1pm, if the afternoon sessions prove successful.

3. Temporary care facility opened at Bath hotel to help free up beds in local hospitals

Patients well enough to leave local hospitals but who require further care before they can return home are to be accommodated in a new temporary care facility at a hotel in Bath.

The new facility is being opened on a temporary basis as a way of releasing much needed hospital beds as well as providing a more appropriate environment for patients to recuperate before they return home.

The shortage of hospital beds is due to high levels of patients requiring treatment for Covid, other winter illnesses and ongoing winter-related pressures.

Homecare agency Abicare have been contracted to supply live in staff to provide care at the hotel.

Care will be provided 24/7 to support up to 15 individuals at any one time. Patients will have access to communal areas where appropriate. Services such as physiotherapy will be provided by local clinical teams.

The new facility is one of a number of measures currently being put in place to help ease pressure on services including asking families to support the discharge of patients who are ready to leave hospital by caring for them at home and opening up bed space in community hospitals.

The name and location of the facility are not being released to the public for confidentiality reasons.

4. Vaccine and booster programme update

More than two million Covid-19 vaccinations have been given out at sites across Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire. The milestone was reached shortly after the region welcomed in the new year, with the current number of total vaccinations now standing at around 2,059,000.

In terms of booster uptake, BSW is currently at around 84 per cent, which is just shy of the government's 85 per cent target.

Figures for the region show that while around 85 per cent of all eligible adults have now had a first, second and booster vaccination, tens of thousands of people are still yet to receive a single vaccine.

There are more than 25,536 adults in Bath and North East Somerset who are completely unvaccinated against Covid-19.

Walk-in vaccination appointments are now available at a number of sites. Pre-booking at many venues is no longer a requirement. It is hoped that by removing the booking process, people who may have been putting off getting vaccinated, perhaps due to work, home or other commitments, will find it easier to get protected.

Vaccine uptake among 12 to 15-year-olds in BSW is good, and currently around 60 per cent of children in this age group have had one jab. In-school second doses are due to start at the beginning of February.

All vaccination centres, including those that offering walk-ins, are listed on NHS England's national Find My Nearest Walk-in Vaccination service.

Those using the online tool will be able to see a list of the vaccination centres closest to them by entering their postcode in the search box

5. Integrated Care System update

On Friday 24 December 2021 it was confirmed that the target date for the establishment of ICSs on a statutory footing would be moved from 1 April to 1 July 2022.

This delay will allow sufficient time for the remaining parliamentary stages of the Health and Care Bill, with the final transition date remaining subject to legislative approval. As a result, BSW CCG will continue as a statutory body until 30 June 2022 and NHS England and Improvement will retain direct commissioning responsibilities that have not already been delegated during this period.

This delay will not impact the CCG's plans to work closely with partners to deliver improved health and care outcomes for residents, building on the momentum of system and borough partnership development over the past few months.

6. Care Model Consultation

Our Shaping a Healthier Future public engagement programme to seek local people's views on our in-development health and care model concluded in mid-December. The model includes plans for improving personalised care, supporting healthier communities, establishing more integrated local teams, prioritising local specialist services and introducing new specialist centres.

The model's production, as well as its corresponding engagement activity, is being carried out by the BSW Partnership.

People across BSW have shared their thoughts and opinions by taking part in a short survey online and by attending in-person engagement events. Around 750 people completed our survey and almost than 1,200 people attended workshops and

interviews. The results from these surveys and events will be fed into the health and care model development process.

7. BSW Partnership Board

The BSW Partnership Board will hold its next meeting in public on 25 February 2022. Members of the public are welcome to attend as observers to find out more about the BSW Partnership, our progress, and our plans for the future.

The meeting will be from 9am to 12pm and will be held virtually via Zoom.

Members of the public can request to attend and observe the meeting in public and submit a question to the BSW Partnership Board by emailing bswccg.partnership@nhs.net.