

Report for Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel - Tuesday, 17th January 2023

Expansion of elective care at Sulis Hospital Bath

Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board (BSW ICB) and the Royal United Hospital Bath (RUH) are jointly developing a plan to provide additional capacity for elective surgery to reduce waiting times across Bath and North East Somerset Swindon and Wiltshire.

The expansion of elective surgery will be provided through the addition of three new operating theatres at the Sulis Hospital Bath in Peasedown St John.

The new Sulis Elective Orthopaedic Centre (SEOC) could offer treatment for 4000 NHS orthopaedic patients a year and address the high number of patients currently waiting for elective orthopaedic procedures which, as of June 2022, totals over 12,000 people.

Sulis Hospital also includes a Community Diagnostic Centre for BSW and the development of the SEOC will further consolidate Sulis Hospital's development as a system-wide support hub.

£30m of national capital is available to help create this facility by 2025; the RUH and system colleagues are currently working up the business case to enable access to this funding.

The new facility would also help to free up capacity at the RUH's main site at Combe Park and help patients awaiting treatment from other surgical specialties, complex cancer cases and managing non-elective care. The SEOC would support around 2000 patients within the local catchment with the remaining capacity available to orthopaedic patients across the wider BSW patch and beyond.

Whilst engagement has been taking place with clinicians, operational staff and senior leaders across the system for the development of the business case, it is now important to ensure wider stakeholders are aware, engaged and supportive of the scheme and to ensure any concerns are addressed.

More information is available in Appendix 1.

Care coordination project

Over the last few weeks, health and care partners across BSW ICB have been working together as part of an ambitious programme to coordinate elements of care across the entire system, from pre-hospital and acute admission through to

discharge and community response.

The Care Coordination project brings together BSW ICB, South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust, local acute hospitals, providers, Medvivo, Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership, local authorities, primary care services and hospices.

Partners have been working together at a central location in Chippenham to provide patients with the right level of response. Often patients access emergency care via the ambulance service. The care coordination centre is looking to get patients to the right service for their needs.

The approach has seen ambulance crews contact the coordination centre for advice and support, prior to taking any patient over 18 and who is not time critical to an emergency department.

Working together mean clinicians have been able to support improved navigation and use of alternative in-hospital pathways, such as Same Day Emergency Care (SDEC), which ensures patients are seen in the setting most suited to their needs.

The project is helping to ease pressures on the ambulance service as well as the wider health and care system.

Early results from the project are very encouraging, and a full evaluation is under way.

Paediatric Urgent Service Hub

From 16 January, BaNES-based GP Federation BEMS will be mobilising the rollout of a Paediatric Urgent Service Hub for children aged five and under who are presenting with symptoms of fever, with the aim to reduce pressures on both primary and secondary care.

GPs are currently being recruited to work in this service.

Clinics will run between 1pm and 5.30pm on weekdays from one location per day at a GP Surgery in Bath and North East Somerset.

Appointments will be same-day bookable, 15-minute slots, with full access to the patient record and direct access to support from the RUH Paediatric team.

Pressures on services in BaNES, Swindon and Wiltshire

During the past few weeks and especially over the Christmas period and first week of January, health and care services in BaNES, Swindon and Wiltshire have been under unprecedented pressure.

This has led to increasing waits for access to services, delays in discharging patients, increased levels of operational risk, a potential deterioration in the patient experience and an impact on the morale of the workforce.

Health and care partners from across the BSW ICB prepared well for this period and have continued to demonstrate strong collaborative working. Winter plans have enhanced the preparedness of the system as well as supporting service change to find new solutions.

A number of initiatives are underway across BSW to help support pressures including increasing capacity through the provision of extra beds at St Martins Hospital in Bath and South Newton Hospital in Salisbury, the provision of a virtual ward initiative providing a safe and efficient alternative to going into hospital for people who are unwell and the Care Coordination project (see below).

Members of the public have been asked to support services by only visiting Accident and Emergency departments or calling 999 in the case of a life-threatening emergency, being available to support relatives being discharged from hospitals, and practicing good self-care such as collecting prescriptions in advance and using services such as [111 online](#) and local pharmacies.

Vaccination update – Covid and Flu

Our winter vaccination programme for Covid and Flu has continued over the past few weeks and has been supported by ongoing communications activity to encourage those who have not yet come forwards for either Covid or Flu vaccinations to do so as soon as possible.

As of January 4, 2,673,057 covid vaccinations have been delivered across BaNES, Swindon and Wiltshire. In BaNES 78 per cent of people have now received their first dose and 76 per cent have received their second dose.

While our Covid vaccination programme continues, the vaccination centre based at Bath Racecourse closed in December as local demand for vaccination begins to reduce, and staff based in the centres move to other areas of the local health and care system.

Access to Covid-19 vaccines continues to be available across the region, with teams setting up base in a wide range of community venues and ready to return to full capacity, should further vaccinations be required.

Walk in clinics across BaNES for Covid vaccinations are taking place in a number of venues across the area through January including Bath City football club and Bath Citadel Salvation Army.

Those not yet vaccinated against Covid-19, as well as any person due a booster jab, can still find their nearest vaccination venue by visiting www.nhs.uk or by calling 119.

Some sites continue to accept people who have not pre-booked an appointment, with details of venues offering a walk-in service available to find via the NHS Grab a Jab portal.

Flu vaccines are free for many people, including the over-50s, and can be arranged through GP practices and community pharmacies.

Industrial action

BSW Integrated Care Board continues to work hard to keep local people safe during planned strikes, while delivering the best care possible.

UNISON and GMB members from South Western Ambulance Services NHS Foundation Trust took part in industrial action on Wednesday 11 January.

Royal College of Nursing members are also planning further strike action on Wednesday 18th and Thursday 19th January. In BSW these strikes will affect Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust and Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust.

In BSW, system partners are working together to ensure operational oversight, sharing of intelligence. BSW-wide co-ordination has been established both through a Strategic Co-ordination Group and Tactical Co-ordination Group.

No-one should put off seeking urgent or emergency care during the strikes and people with serious, life-threatening conditions will continue to be seen at our Emergency Departments.

On days when there is strike action, people should only call 999 if it is a medical or mental health emergency. Ambulances will still respond in these situations, but this may only be where there is an immediate risk to life.

Appendix 1: Expansion of elective care at Sulis Hospital Bath

- A key part of the national Elective Recovery Programme for tackling the backlog of elective care is the Get it Right First Time High Volume Low Complexity (GIRFT HVLC) programme. This supports the development of elective surgical hubs which operate at maximum efficiency and high-quality standards, with planned care capacity ring-fenced from disruption.
- Across the South West and exacerbated by the COVID pandemic, the number of patients waiting for elective orthopaedic procedures has been increasing year on year. As of June 2022, there were over 12,000 people in BSW awaiting orthopaedic procedures. Whilst the use of acute sites as the only elective capacity means access to treatment is vulnerable to seasonal pressures and operational demands, an elective hub would create ring-fenced capacity and the conditions for significant productivity and clinical improvements.
- The BSW ICS Five Year Plan seeks to create consistently good patient pathways for elective care across the area which maximise opportunities for preventative and community-based care. In line with this plan and the BSW elective strategy, ring-fenced elective capacity will support the development of standardised pathways of care to achieve a reduction in variation, greater efficiency and an improved patient experience.
- The Sulis Hospital Bath, purchased by the RUH in 2021 for the benefit of the wider system, is an ideal location to develop elective capacity as it is a 'cold site' ring-fenced from winter pressures, the existing hospital is high-quality and the site has space and facilities to support expansion. By adding an additional 3 theatres to the facility it could offer treatment for 4000 NHS orthopaedic patients a year as a specialist Sulis Elective Orthopaedic Centre (SEOC). Sulis Hospital also includes a Community Diagnostic Centre for BSW and the development of the SEOC will further consolidate Sulis Hospital's development as a system-wide support hub.
- £30m of national capital is available to help create this facility by 2025; the RUH and system colleagues are currently working up the business case to enable access to this funding. An Outline Business Case is expected to be formally considered by the National Team in April 2023.
- Due to the proximity of Sulis Hospital to Combe Park, the majority of RUH elective orthopaedics surgery that does not require specialist acute hospital support could potentially be provided at the SEOC, and this would free up capacity at Combe Park to use for patients awaiting treatment from other surgical specialties, complex cancer cases and managing non-elective care. The SEOC would support around 2000 patients within the local catchment with the remaining capacity available to orthopaedic patients across the wider BSW patch and beyond.

- Whilst engagement has been taking place with clinicians, operational staff and senior leaders across the system for the development of the business case, it is now important to ensure wider stakeholders are aware, engaged and supportive of the scheme and to ensure any concerns are addressed. Whilst detailed pathways are still to be developed, given NHS patients are already treated at Sulis and the SEOC will offer improved access to high quality treatment, subject to scrutiny panel agreement, the proposals are not currently anticipated to constitute a “Significant Service Change event”.
- The principles of the case have been through December meetings of the ICB Finance and Investment Committee and ICB Elective Care Board. The Full Business Case will be scheduled to be discussed by the ICB Executive Committee circa April 2023.
- Our plan for the first phase of wider stakeholder engagement between January – February 2023 is to gain insight into the following line of questioning:
 - What are your views on the proposals?
 - Do you have any concerns?
 - Is there anymore that you want to know?

We will approach three major stakeholders:

GPs

The RUH will work with BSW ICB as well as using its own routes to gain insight from local GPs, particularly with reference to the patient pathway.

Members and Governors

The RUH and BSW ICB will engage with Foundation trust Members and Governors via the RUH Corporate Governance team to understand the wider population’s views on accessing elective surgery.

Post-surgery orthopaedic RUH patients

The RUH and BSW ICB will work with the RUH Patient Engagement team to speak to those who’ve recently had their orthopaedic surgery at the RUH to gauge their thoughts on the option of Sulis.

