

Report for Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel – Monday 11 March 2024

Pharmacists in BaNES offering treatment for more common conditions

Patients in Bath are now able to receive treatment for seven common conditions at their high street pharmacy without needing to see a GP, as part of a new initiative called Pharmacy First

All pharmacies in Bath will be offering the initiative making it easier and more convenient for people to access care. More widely, 100 per cent of pharmacies across the wider BaNES, Swindon and Wiltshire area have signed up to the scheme.

Highly trained pharmacists will be able to assess and treat patients for sinusitis, sore throat, earache, infected insect bite, impetigo, shingles, and uncomplicated urinary tract infections in women (under the age of 65) without the need for a GP appointment or prescription.

The major expansion of pharmacy services will give the public more choice in where and how they access care, aiming to free up GP appointments in the BaNES area.

Prescription Ordering Direct service update

Following our inclusion of details about the closure of the Prescription Ordering Direct (POD) service in February's report we would like to offer the following update.

As of Thursday 29 February, POD will no longer be accepting prescription requests sent in via email or through the form on the ICB website.

Patients who had previously ordered their medicines online are advised to continue doing so via the NHS App, which can be downloaded free on any tablet or smartphone.

In addition, from Friday 1 March, phone lines into POD will open at the slightly later time of 10am and close earlier at 3pm.

Those with queries about the closure of POD can find out more by reading a list of [frequently asked questions](#) on the ICB website.

Royal United Hospital Sulis Elective Orthopaedic Centre (SEOC) update

The plans are progressing well for the construction of two additional theatres on the Sulis Hospital Site with planning permission having been submitted during the summer, and an approval notification expected shortly. There are car parking

challenges on site which we are aware of and plans are being worked up to address the provision alongside the overall travel plan for the site.

The additional theatres are for orthopaedic patients to continually drive down waiting times for these patients across BSW and also further afield from Devon and Cornwall. Operational planning at a system level is being led by an Acute Hospital Alliance Group to ensure patient pathways are ready for the launch of the service next Summer. Recruitment has started to happen for some key posts that we are employing ahead of the operational start date to ensure the facility is ready. There is a more targeted recruitment plan being worked up that will start shortly, including overseas recruitment and an attractive marketing campaign. The project is currently to the predicted cost and programme

NHS Dental recovery plan

Following our recent reports and presentations to the committee on the provision of dentistry services in BaNES, and a recent update to the Health and Wellbeing Board, we would like to offer the following national update on the government's recently published [Dental Recovery Plan](#).

While the details about this for BaNES and BSW are in development, the national headline elements of the new plan are as follows, and we can offer a further local update on this when we have more information

- £200m of new funding has been made available to improve access to NHS dental care in England for those that need it most, especially people living in underserved parts of the country, which will see up to 2.5 million additional appointments including up to 1.5 million additional treatments in NHS dentistry.
- Dentists will be given a new payment to treat patients who have not seen an NHS dentist in two years or more.
- The NHS will support parents and families to improve the oral healthcare of children, reducing the number of children having to go into hospital to remove their decaying teeth – a procedure which is largely avoidable.
- New mobile dental vans will bring targeted NHS dental care to areas that are isolated or under-served.
- More dentists will be incentivised to work in areas that historically have struggled to recruit and retain staff.

RUH environmental initiatives

The Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Trust has reported two positive pieces of news which underline its commitment to providing environmentally sustainable healthcare.

It has announced it is on course to successfully deliver its five-year sustainable travel strategy, meeting 92 per cent of its actions.

The plan informs and supports staff and visitors to travel to the Trust in a way which is environmentally and socially sustainable as well as cost-effective. The RUH is scaling up a number of initiatives alongside our community partners to reduce air pollution in the area, including:

- More than doubling the cycle storage space onsite
- Introducing an e-bikes loan scheme for staff to trial
- Children's Therapies using an e-cargo bike to visit our patients in the community
- Launching the "Join My Journey" staff car sharing scheme
- Offering e-scooter discounts and a salary sacrifice scheme for electric and ULEV cars
- Supporting BANES "Kick the habit" campaign by encouraging everyone to turn their vehicle engines off when stationary
- Increasing air quality monitoring
- Increasing the value of bicycles available through the staff salary sacrifice cycle purchase scheme
- Subsidising staff discount for travel on First Bus services
- Encouraging use of public transport, including Park & Ride facilities

The trust has also reduced carbon emissions by 2 per cent by switching to using portable gas canisters to deliver medical nitrous oxide gas to patients on wards, reducing use of the gas from 2m litres to 13,500 litres a year.

Nitrous oxide is used as part of anaesthesia but is a potent greenhouse gas, estimated to be nearly 300 times worse than carbon dioxide for the environment. A significant proportion of nitrous oxide emissions at older NHS hospitals is due to waste from manifolds and the associated old pipework.

For mothers in labour Entonox, ("gas and air") is still readily available for those that need it.

Industrial action

Junior Doctors across hospitals in Bath took part in Industrial Action from February 22nd to 28th. The Industrial Action resulted in disruption, including increased waiting times and a high number of cancelled appointments at the RUH

BSW Integrated Care Board and system partners have worked hard to keep local people safe during the strikes, while delivering the best care possible. We worked with partners to ensure the smooth running of services and provided a coordinated communications campaign to let the public know how to access services and where to look for help.