

Report for Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel – Monday 15 April 2024

Covid spring booster programme

The Covid-19 booster vaccination programme for those most at risk of serious illness from the virus will begin in April.

The advice for this Spring is to offer the vaccine to those at high risk of serious disease and who are therefore most likely to benefit from vaccination.

The JCVI advises the following groups should be offered a COVID-19 booster vaccine this Spring:

- Adults aged 75 years and over.
- Residents in a care home for older adults.
- Individuals aged 6 months and over who are immunosuppressed.

GP practice merger Midsomer Norton

Somerton House Surgery in Midsomer Norton is set to become a branch surgery of nearby St Chads Surgery from Monday 1 April, as part of a planned arrangement brought on by the retirement of an existing GP partner.

The practice merger will enable both clinical and non-clinical teams to share resources and cut duplication, while also creating more choice and availability for patients.

Teams at both St Chads and Somerton House have been working together behind the scenes on the logistics of the new arrangement for some time.

Patients have been informed about the merger through a press release, practice newsletters and an in-person engagement event.

The merger will not affect how patients communicate with their registered practice, with people advised to continue contacting their surgery in the usual way.

Although no such plans are currently in place, should contact details for either practice change in the future, patients will be communicated with at the very earliest opportunity.

More information about the merger can be found through the practices' respective websites, while further details about primary care in general are available at www.bsw.icb.nhs.uk.

Sulis Elective Orthopaedic Centre update

Planning permission has now been granted by BaNES Council for the Royal United Hospitals (RUH) Bath NHS Foundation Trust (RUH) to build a new wing at Sulis Hospital, a fully operational independent hospital owned by the RUH that treats both NHS and private patients.

Situated at Sulis Hospital in Peasedown St John, just outside of Bath, the new Sulis Elective Orthopaedic Centre (SEOC) will act as an NHS elective surgery hub; it will serve NHS patients from across the South West, helping to tackle the region's backlog of elective, non-emergency surgery.

It will mean an additional 3,750 non-emergency, orthopaedic operations can be carried out for NHS patients at the hospital each year.

The new development, which has secured £25m in national NHS funding, will be a centre of excellence, working to national best-practice standards and providing high-quality care. The plans include:

- Two additional modular theatres
- Additional inpatient capacity
- Seven extra day case pods
- Conversion of two existing theatres to laminar flow theatres, providing a work area with sterile conditions and the very highest standards of cleanliness.

Surgery at the site will be protected from disruption and cancellations caused by surges in emergency hospital admissions because Sulis does not have an emergency department. This means that the SEOC will enhance the resilience of services in the future.

Around 60 per cent of capacity will be used to carry out elective orthopaedic procedures that would otherwise be managed at the RUH's main Combe Park site, with the remaining 40 per cent available to support the wider region's NHS elective recovery programme and future growth in demand projected to arise from the ageing population in Bath and the South West.

Maternity services at Bath's Royal United Hospital retain outstanding rating from the CQC

Maternity services at the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust are in the top three per cent in England following a recent inspection by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) which saw the team retain its 'outstanding' rating.

Following the inspection in November 2023, inspectors found examples of outstanding practice relating to the RUH's commitment to continuously improving services, patient experience and the supportive environment provided for staff.

The development of a maternity and neonatal communication plan to improve engagement with staff was noted as 'outstanding practice'.

Inspectors also found that:

- The service engaged well with women, birthing people and the community to plan and manage services.
- People could access the service when they needed it and did not have to wait too long for treatment, and all staff were committed to continually improving services.
- Staff said they felt respected, supported, and valued and were focused on the needs of women and birthing people receiving care.
- Staff managed safety and medicines well, assessed risks to women and birthing people, acted on them and kept good care records.
- Staff had training in key skills and understood how to protect women and birthing people from abuse.
- Inspectors also found that safety incidents were well managed and the service learned lessons from them.
- Leaders ran services well using reliable information systems and supported staff to develop their skills, while managers monitored the effectiveness of the service and made sure staff were competent.
- Staff were clear about their roles and accountabilities and understood the service's vision and values, and how to apply them in their work.

For the first time, community birth centres in Frome and Chippenham were also included in the inspection, with both centres receiving an overall 'good' rating. Inspectors recognised the community teams' commitment to continually learning and improving services, including several initiatives to tackle health inequalities and the ongoing quality improvement projects facilitating women and birthing people's choice of birthplace.

Dyson Cancer Centre at RUH to welcome patients in April 2024

The new Dyson Cancer Centre at the Royal United Hospitals (RUH) Bath NHS Foundation Trust is due to open to patients this April.

The purpose-built facility will provide a cancer services hub for over 500,000 people in the South West.

As final preparations continue for the move, there will be no disruption to services during this time. Outpatients who would expect to be seen at the RUH in April 2024 will be contacted well in advance with appointment locations and details.

The new centre is backed by over £40m in Government funding as part of the New Hospital Programme. The Dyson Cancer Centre was also supported by a £10m campaign from RUHX, the hospital's official charity, including a £4m donation from the James Dyson Foundation and £1m by the Medlock Charitable Trust. A further £1.5m was donated by Macmillan Cancer Support to fund the Macmillan Wellbeing Hub.

A key feature of the new centre is the Macmillan Wellbeing Hub, funded by Macmillan Cancer Support, which will provide a welcoming, non-clinical space designed around the needs of patients and their families. Spread across three floors, the hub includes counselling rooms, complementary therapy spaces, information space, and comfortable accommodation where relatives and loved ones can stay overnight.

Answers to questions raised at Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel meeting on 12 March

1) Can BSW ICB respond to the issue of a Ukrainian refugee living in BSW being unable to access dental treatment flying home to Ukraine for treatment

BSW ICB recently responded to questions about this issue reported by BBC local news as follows:

While we are unable to comment on individual cases and without the full details, it would appear that the patient in this case may meet the criteria for an urgent dental or a stabilisation appointment and we encourage the family to also contact NHS111 where the details will be assessed clinically and if appropriate an urgent dental appointment will be arranged.

Since September 2021 BSW ICB has commissioned additional urgent dental care appointments that people can access by calling NHS111 with an urgent dental need. There are 390 appointments every week across the South West, with 86 urgent dental appointments in Wiltshire each week.

There are also 750 appointments of Stabilisation across the South West (where people have a serious dental problem that doesn't meet urgent criteria, we have

introduced stabilisation appointments) with around 95 stabilisation appointments in BSW providing definitive treatment to patients requiring dental care.

Additionally, a summary of BSW ICB plans to recover and transform dental services in BSW was recently presented at the BSW Integrated Care Board Meeting in Public. Papers and presentations for this item [can be found on the BSW ICB website](#)

2) Can BSW ICB offer any reassurance that directing people to pharmacies for treatment will not undermine the benefits for patients of having one point of contact via a GP who will monitor their health? How will safety be monitored in terms of pharmacies offering advice and how will more staff will be recruited?

The Pharmacy First service builds on the NHS Community Pharmacist Consultation Service which has run since October 2019 and is expected to free up GP appointments for patients who need them most and give people quicker and more convenient access to safe and high-quality healthcare. It includes the supply of appropriate medicines for seven common conditions including earache, sore throat, and urinary tract infections, aiming to address health issues before they get worse.

Previously, NHS patients in England had to visit their GP to access prescription-only medication, meaning repeated GP visits and delays in treatment.

Community pharmacies offer a more convenient way to access healthcare that includes support with healthy eating, exercise, stopping smoking, monitoring your blood pressure, contraception, flu and covid vaccinations.

A public perceptions of community pharmacy survey recently found that over 90 per cent of patients who sought guidance from a community pharmacy within the past year reported receiving good advice.

For the seven common conditions, pharmacists will follow a robust clinical pathway which includes self-care and safety-netting advice and, only if appropriate, supplying a restricted set of prescription-only medicines without the need to visit a GP.

These clinical pathways have been developed with input from various experts including practising GPs, pharmacists, and antimicrobial resistance specialists as well as representatives from national organisations such as the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and UK Health Security Agency. This ensures that the steps we take together match the care patients would receive in general practice and follow the latest national guidelines.

Every pharmacist trains for five years in the use of medicines and managing minor illnesses, so they are well-equipped to provide health and wellbeing advice to help people stay well. They are also experienced in spotting warning signs, otherwise known as red flag symptoms, which may warrant a referral to another healthcare provider.

After a consultation with the pharmacist, the pharmacy will send a notification to the patient's GP on the same day or on the following working day.

3) Can we explain the role of the SEND representative on the ICB Board and what other ICB committees do they sit on?

Gill May, the Chief Nurse of the Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon, and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board (BSW ICB), currently serves as the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) representative on the Integrated Care Board. In this capacity, she holds executive responsibility for fulfilling the ICB's duties and obligations concerning SEND.

BSW ICB is a statutory body which brings together NHS organisations with local authorities and other partners to work to improve population health and establish shared strategic priorities. Accordingly, the representation and advocacy for SEND issues are approached collaboratively, with the Chief Nurse participating in multiple forums across the BSW region, including safeguarding boards and the Children and Young People transformation group.

4) Has there been any ICB comms about Pharmacy First and also about the closure of the Prescription Ordering Direct (POD) service?

Details of the Pharmacy First scheme have been communicated widely to the public in BaNES, Swindon and Wiltshire through social media channels, newsletter stories, national and local TV coverage, through Healthwatch and comms from individual pharmacies.

Details about plans for the Prescription Ordering Direct service have been communicated to the public via two press releases resulting in 12 pieces of local media press coverage, FAQs for the public on the BSW ICB website, social media posts, newsletter coverage and HOSC updates for all three local authorities in BSW.