

Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Update

Adults Health, Adults Care and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 30 January 2018

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Wards: Swindon
Parishes Affected: Swindon

1. Purpose and Reasons

1.1 This report provides the Adults Care, Adults Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update of key issues relating to Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

1.2 A key purpose of the Adults Care, Adults Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to hold providers of healthcare services to account.

As a provider of healthcare in Swindon, Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is required to provide information on the planning and provision of healthcare services within the Borough and consult with the Committee on any planned substantial changes or developments.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

2.1 Note the report

Identify any areas of concern or interest that require further investigation.

3. Detail

This is a general update from Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

3.1 Postponed operations at GWH

The start to any new year is always challenging and 2018 has been no exception.

In the week between Christmas and New Year, more than 1,600 patients attended the Emergency Department at GWH, with this level of heightened demand continuing throughout January and across other areas of the organisation, such as in the community. To provide context, the ED opened in 2002, was designed for 48,000 attendances a year. Last year the department saw 86,000 people.

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In light of the pressure affecting the wider NHS, a national directive sent jointly from NHS England and NHS Improvement required trusts to review the elective activity that had been planned for January to ensure that priority could be given to the ever-increasing number of emergency patients.

Like other NHS providers, the Trust made the difficult decision of postponing routine operations during the first month of 2018.

This decision was not taken lightly and, although appointments are being rearranged as quickly as possible, the Trust has apologised for any unnecessary upset and worry that had been caused by the changes.

Urgent operations, such as those for cancer and emergency trauma went ahead as planned throughout January.

The aim has been to free up bed capacity for emergency admissions, as well as free up more clinical staff to support emergency activity where possible.

Affected patients were contacted proactively in advance of their appointment date, while wider messages from the Trust encouraged patients booked to attend hospital in January to come in as normal unless they had been contacted and told otherwise.

This was to prevent valuable appointment slots being wasted.

3.2 Successful bid for extra winter funding

As mentioned in the Chancellor's budget at the end of 2017, around £350 million was put aside to support the NHS throughout winter.

Following a successful bid for a portion of this funding, the local system was awarded just over £1.3 million to invest in new initiatives and measures that would ease pressure and help manage demand.

This money has been used to support the Trust in three key areas: the front door at GWH, seven day services and patient flow.

Some of the new initiatives that have been funded from the £1.3 million include:

- Working with local nursing homes across Swindon to purchase additional beds, which can be used for patients who are well enough to leave hospital but unable to be discharged due to difficulties in arranging an onward care package.

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- Bringing in extra resource to help increase and then sustain the number of discharges that happen at the weekend.
- Increasing therapy, radiology and pharmacy provision on Saturdays and Sundays, while also giving extra weekend support to the community equipment team.
- Recruiting more staff to work at the front door at GWH to help manage the increasing number of emergency attendances.
 - This includes more senior support at weekends, more porters, more triage resource and more mental health workers.

This money is non-recurrent funding which is for use between late December and the end of March.

We are also looking at what existing office space at GWH could realistically be converted into additional bed space for the remainder of the winter without causing significant disruption.

Many of these initiatives are already up and running and we will be assessing those which have the greatest impact to understand what may be beneficial in the long term.

3.3 Brighter Futures' Radiotherapy Appeal reaches £2 million

Brighter Futures, the GWH charity announced just before Christmas that more than £2 million has been raised in the appeal to bring the life saving Radiotherapy treatment to the town.

Two days before Christmas, the Trust's registered charity revealed that since 2015, when the Radiotherapy Appeal was officially launched, a staggering £2,043,046 has been raised through the generosity of local people.

The achievement means the Radiotherapy Appeal is now in its final stages, with less than £900,000 needed to be raised before the grand total is reached.

Brighter Futures need to raise £2.9 million to supply the specialist equipment that will be at the heart of a new radiotherapy unit that will be built at GWH.

Currently, cancer patients in Swindon needing radiotherapy have to travel long distances, usually over consecutive days for anything up to six weeks, to nearby centres in Oxford, Bath and Cheltenham.

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The appeal total is expected to be reached during 2018, with building work on the new centre, which will be run as a satellite to the cancer service offered by Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, starting in the spring.

3.4 EU healthcare staff able to stay after Brexit

Following the completion of the first round of negotiations with the European Union, the government announced in December that EU citizens currently living in the UK will be able to continue to do so after the country's withdrawal.

It means that the thousands of EU citizens currently working in the NHS, including many in Swindon and Wiltshire, will be able to carry on doing the job they have trained for after Friday 29 March 2019.

As part of the agreement, EU citizens will need to apply for settled status when the application process opens later in the year.

It is expected that applications for settled status will be accepted up to two years after the UK's departure from the EU.

Between 2014 and 2017, 195 EU citizens joined the Trust as permanent members of staff.

We welcome the government's announcement and hope it relieves the inevitable anxiety and worry many of these people would have been feeling.

3.5 Norovirus at GWH

We are continuing to advise friends and relatives not to come to hospital if they have had recent symptoms of diarrhoea and vomiting.

Our warnings came after Teal Ward at the Great Western Hospital had to be closed in mid-December, when both patients and staff began to show symptoms of the winter vomiting bug.

It is believed norovirus was brought into hospital by a symptomatic member of the public visiting a patient who was being treated on the ward.

Norovirus is a common illness at this time of year and can spread quickly in public places where there is a high volume of people passing through, such as schools, hospitals and restaurants.

The ward was closed for several days while Infection Control teams sanitised the affected area.

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At the same time, staff across the organisation were reminded of the importance of good hand hygiene and that soap and water should be used in addition to the alcohol hand gel, which is available at the entrance to each ward at GWH.

3.6 Flu update

The Trust has exceeded its target of giving the winter flu jab to 70 per cent of frontline staff.

At the time of writing, just over 3,200, or more than 77 per cent of, patient-facing staff – such as doctors, nurses, midwives, physiotherapists and ward clerks – have had the flu jab, which makes the 2017/18 campaign our most successful to date.

The overall number of vaccinated staff rises to 3,943 when non-clinical teams as well as those staff providing support behind the scenes, are also included in the total.

This year's success can be attributed to the extensive flu clinics that took place at GWH and in the community during the first six weeks of the campaign and also the peer vaccinator scheme, which saw colleagues giving the flu jab to members of their ward-based team who would have otherwise struggled to visit one of the clinics.

Given the inevitable challenges that winter brings – along with threat of the UK experiencing a flu epidemic similar to what has been seen in Australia and New Zealand, having a workforce which prioritises its own health and wellbeing will mean we are in the best possible position to continue providing care for patients during the colder months of the year.

From a patient perspective into January we have seen an increase in admissions from flu related illnesses. We continue to encourage everyone to protect themselves and their loved ones by getting the flu jab.

3.7 Trust takes strong approach to criminal behaviour

Since April 2017, the Trust has taken a tougher approach to criminal behaviour on the GWH site and has secured three custodial sentences, as well as a number of injunctions, for the offenders.

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Many of the crimes committed at GWH involve assault and aggressive behaviour towards members of staff, for which the Trust has a zero tolerance policy.

One in particular, which saw a nurse in the Emergency Department assaulted, resulted in the offender being sent to prison for seven and a half months.

Elsewhere, injunctions – which prohibit a person from visiting hospital except in the event of a medical emergency – have been issued to several patients who acted in a rude and abusive manner towards staff.

With three months left, the 2017/18 year has been the most successful to date in terms of taking action against people intent on causing trouble and disruption at GWH.

For the last 18 months, the Trust has been promoting its Never OK campaign, which reminds patients and visitors to hospital that verbal or physical abuse aimed at staff will never be acceptable and that the necessary action will always be taken.

3.8 GP out-of-hours provision transfers to Medvivo

From Thursday 1 February, community healthcare provider Medvivo will begin management of the GP out-of-hours provision in Swindon.

The current service has been provided by the Trust since autumn 2016, when community services transferred from its former provider Seqol.

However, the long term plan has always been for the Trust to seek an external provider to deliver the service.

This new arrangement will add much-needed resilience to Swindon's GP out-of-hours service, especially as Medvivo has a proven track record of delivering positive results in this area as well as a workforce with specialist skills in community care.

As part of the transfer, a small number of Trust staff will move with the service to Medvivo.

We would like to extend our thanks to these staff for their efforts and hard work in developing the out-of-hours service over the past 18 months.

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4. Alternative Options

4.1 None.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

5.1 None.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

5.2 None.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

5.3 None.

Diversity Impact Assessment

5.4 None.

Risk Management

5.5 None.

6. Consultees

6.1 The Director of Finance, (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

7.1 None.

8. Appendices

8.1 None.