

HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10 MARCH 2021

UPDATE ON HEALTH SERVICES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Summary

1. The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) is to have a further update on the restoration stage of health services following the initial COVID-19 response including the rollout of the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme.
2. The HOSC received reports on 27 January 2021, as well as on 18 June, 20 July, 30 September and 16 November 2020 outlining the response of health and social care services to the COVID-19 pandemic and early thoughts about how working practices were envisaged to change as a result of learning from new ways of working.
3. The HOSC was also advised about services which had changed temporarily in response to the pandemic, either because it was not possible to keep the service safe, or because staff had to be redeployed to services considered of higher priority.
4. Representatives have been invited from Herefordshire and Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group, Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust and Public Health.
5. It is envisaged that this update will contribute to further scrutiny as health services continue to recover and the vaccine rollout continues. Additional information is provided at Appendix 1. The update will also build on the HOSC's on-going scrutiny to review performance of acute hospital services in Worcestershire and the impact on, and roles of, commissioners and health and care providers.
6. The information provided for the Committee's most recent update on 27 January 2021 is available here: [web-link to agenda and minutes](#)

COVID-19 Vaccination Programme

7. The COVID-19 Vaccination Programme continues to make excellent progress with more than 40% of the local population having now had their first dose. This includes nearly everyone aged over 70 and already over 80% of people aged between 65 and 69. The latest figures are published on the [NHS England website](#).
8. The NHS has a very impressive network of other local facilities that are providing vaccination to help defeat COVID-19. Sites in the Herefordshire and Worcestershire COVID-19 vaccination network include:
 - Vaccination Centres – these are large scale venues which can vaccinate large numbers of people. There are three sites in Worcestershire: the

Artrix Theatre in Bromsgrove, St Peter's Baptist Church in Worcester and the Three Counties Showground in Malvern

- GP-led vaccination services – these are led by Primary Care Networks of local GP surgeries working together. There are 12 of these sites across Worcestershire
- GP-led teams working to protect care home residents vaccinating inside the homes, as well as visiting housebound patients
- Community pharmacies – one has now opened in Redditch.

9. The NHS is determined to ensure that nobody is left behind. A Vaccination Inequality Programme has been established to focus specifically on supporting population groups at risk of low COVID-19 vaccine uptake. In partnership with Worcestershire County Council, District Councils and other partners, the NHS is reviewing data on the uptake so far and checking whether those who have not taken up their invitation have done so due to barriers to access or other concerns that can be addressed.

Restoration of Temporary Service Changes

10. The NHS Long Term Plan (LTP) remains the road map for service integration and transformation and the majority of temporary service changes that have been made align with the LTP.

11. Whilst the NHS responds to the COVID-19 pandemic, it may be necessary to make rapid changes to services as the situation changes. The NHS will retain flexibility across the system to respond to the changing environment.

12. As the NHS works through the temporary service changes it will always prioritise the safety of service users, patients, staff and the public – for some services it is currently not possible to fully restore them and comply with social distancing guidelines.

13. The NHS is continuing to monitor the impact and any benefits of temporary service changes on all the users of NHS services, keeping quality and equality impact assessments up to date, monitoring health inequalities and digitally excluded users of services. All services, both primary care and secondary care, are proactively reviewing patients who are waiting to be seen and prioritising those at highest risk.

14. Proposals to make any temporary service changes into permanent changes would be subject to appropriate engagement and consultation to ensure patients and stakeholders have the opportunity to be involved before any decisions are made.

Purpose of the Meeting

15. Members are invited to consider and comment on the information discussed and agree:

- whether any further information is required
- whether any further scrutiny work is required at this stage.

Supporting Information

- Appendix 1 – Presentation Slides on COVID-19 Vaccination and Service Restoration (to follow)

Contact Points

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance), the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

- Agenda and Minutes from the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 27 January 2021, and 2 March, 18 June, 20 July, 30 September and 16 November 2020 – available on the website: [Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agendas and Minutes](#)
- Agenda and Minutes from COVID-19 Report to Cabinet on 4 June and 25 June 2020 – available on the website: [Cabinet Agendas and minutes](#)