

Agenda Item 4

		THE HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR LINCOLNSHIRE	
Boston Borough Council	East Lindsey District Council	City of Lincoln Council	Lincolnshire County Council
North Kesteven District Council	South Holland District Council	South Kesteven District Council	West Lindsey District Council

Report to	Health Scrutiny Committee for Lincolnshire
Date:	17 June 2020
Subject:	Chairman's Announcements

1. **First Meeting of the Committee Since 19 February 2020**

This is the first meeting of the Health Scrutiny Committee for Lincolnshire for four months, following the cancellation of the March, April and May meetings. It has been appropriate to leave the local NHS to deal with the exceptional circumstances of the covid-19 pandemic.

The announcements numbered 2 – 7 below refer to items that have arisen as a result of covid-19 pandemic. Items 8 - 10 cover issues referred to at the last meeting of the Committee on 19 February 2020.

2. **Care Quality Commission – Suspension of Activities**

On 16 March 2020, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) wrote to health care providers to advise them that they were suspending inspections until further notice. The CQC stated that in its letter that its primary objective during the period of the covid-19 pandemic would be to support health care providers to keep people safe during a period of unprecedented pressure on the health and care system. The CQC also confirmed that it would not be doing anything to distract health care providers from using their discretion in looking after the public. The CQC stated that it would introduce an interim methodology for the period of the pandemic and certain services would continue.

Prior to this, on 27 February 2020, the CQC had released two reports following unannounced inspections of A&E departments at Lincoln County Hospital and Pilgrim Hospital, Boston, on 6 and 7 January 2020.

3. Dental Services – Routine Face to Face Services

On 25 March 2020, all face to face routine and non-urgent dental care, including orthodontics, was suspended, by the Chief Dental Officer (CDO) of England. Practices could offer telephone or video-link consultations and prescribe pain killers and antibiotics. They were also able to refer those patients in need of urgent treatment to an urgent dental centre.

On 28 May, the Chief Dental Officer advised all dental practices that they should aim to open from 8 June 2020, where they have the necessary infection prevention and control and PPE requirements in place. The CDO advised that the sequencing and scheduling of patients for treatment as services resume should take into account:

- the urgency of needs
- the particular unmet needs of vulnerable groups
- available capacity to undertake activity.

4. NHS Debt Write-off

On 2 April 2020, the Secretary of State for Health and Social announced that over £13 billion of NHS debt would be written off, as part of a financial reset for NHS providers. The Secretary of State stated that the changes would provide much needed financial support during the unprecedented pandemic, as well as laying secure foundations for longer-term commitments, set out last year to support the NHS to become more financially sustainable. This would be part of a package of major reforms to the NHS financial system, designed by the Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England / Improvement.

The detail within the announcement stated that United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust will have a total of £377.9 million written off (£343.4 million revenue debt and £35.5 million of capital debt).

North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust will have £268.2 million written off (£212.1 million revenue and £56.1 million capital), while the figures for Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust are £210.6 million (£199.9 million revenue and £10.7 million capital).

5. NHS Test and Trace

On 28 May 2020, the *NHS Test and Trace* Service was launched. The service aims to identify, to contain and control coronavirus, reduce the spread of the virus and save lives. Anyone who tests positive for coronavirus will be contacted by *NHS Test and Trace* and will need to share information about their recent interactions. This could include household members, people with whom they have been in direct contact or within two metres for more than 15 minutes. People identified as having been in close contact with someone who has a positive test must stay at home for 14 days, even if they do not have symptoms, to stop unknowingly spreading the virus.

If those in isolation develop symptoms, they can book a test at nhs.uk/coronavirus or by calling 119, which has been launched to take pressure off the 111 service. If they test positive, they must continue to stay at home for seven days or until their symptoms have passed. If they test negative, they must complete the 14-day isolation period.

Local authorities have been allocated funding to support *NHS Test and Trace* in their local communities, and will be required to develop outbreak control plans, which will focus on identifying and containing potential outbreaks in places such as workplaces, housing complexes, care homes and schools.

6. Lincolnshire Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment

The Health and Wellbeing Board is required to publish an updated Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) every three years and the next PNA had been due for publication in March 2021. On 7 April 2020, members of the Committee were advised of a project plan for the development of the PNA in line with this timetable.

On 21 May 2020, the Department of Health and Social Care announced that the requirement to publish a renewed PNA would be suspended until April 2022. The Health Scrutiny Committee will be involved in consultation on its development during 2021.

7. NHS Provider Quality Accounts 2019/20

The NHS Quality Account Regulations 2010 have been amended to allow providers of NHS-funded more time to prepare their draft quality accounts for 2019/20. In effect, the regulations remove the timetable for providers to provide a draft quality account to the local overview and scrutiny committee, healthwatch organisation or clinical commissioning group.

The Health Scrutiny Committee, via its working group, has agreed to focus on the detailed quality accounts of the East Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust and United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust.

8. Online Triage Systems for GP Practices

At the Committee's February meeting, members of the Committee requested more information on services such as *Ask My GP*. Online triaging can help GPs to manage their patient caseload. *Ask My GP* is just one example of an online triaging service and there are at least two other online triaging platforms on the market for general practices.

As a result of the coronavirus pandemic GP practices have been significantly expanding their use of telephone and video consultations, not just the use of triaging services. This development is probably something the Committee will consider in the coming months.

9. Renal Dialysis Services Update

As previously reported to the Committee, NHS England/Improvement commissions renal dialysis services for Lincolnshire from University Hospitals of Leicester (UHL) NHS Trust, which manages services at four sites in Lincolnshire.

The Lincoln dialysis unit is staffed by staff employed by UHL. The 'satellite' units in Boston, Skegness and Grantham are sub-contracted by UHL to other providers. UHL reported in September 2018 on its proposals for re-commissioning the services at the satellite units. I reported to the Committee on 22 January 2020 that Renal Services (UK) Ltd had been awarded a ten year contract to continue the Grantham and Skegness service, and to take over the service in Boston from Fresenius.

UHL had previously announced that the Boston Dialysis Unit contract had been renewed on 1 December 2019 and that Renal Services (UK) Ltd would take over the management of the unit from Fresenius Medical Care.

Planning Permission Granted

Planning permission has now been granted for the new site in Fishtoft Road and work to transform the building will commence week of 24 February 2020. The site was previously an office block and is close to residential premises and a regular bus route. It is 2.4 miles from the current unit.

Fresenius will continue to deliver the service under the current arrangements until the new unit is ready. As a result there will be no change to the current dialysis location and service before June 2020.

10. Non-Emergency Patient Transport for Renal Dialysis Patients

Following the Committee's consideration of non-emergency patient transport arrangements on 19 February 2020, I would like to provide some clarification on the arrangements for transport arrangements patients receiving renal dialysis services.

Lincoln Renal Dialysis Unit

Transport for patients to and from the Lincoln Renal Dialysis Unit has always been included in the Clinical Commissioning Groups' non-emergency patient transport contract, which is now with Thames Ambulance Service Limited (TASL). This unit has staff employed by University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust (UHL), and as stated above there has been no change to the operation of the unit, as it was not part of the procurement undertaken by UHL. Similarly, there has been no change to the transport arrangements, which remain with TASL. The commissioners state that they continue to work with TASL to improve the transport service for Lincoln patients.

Boston, Grantham and Skegness Renal Dialysis Units

Historically the transport service for dialysis patients at Boston, Grantham and Skegness has been included in a contract between the Lincolnshire CCGs and UHL, which includes a range of elective and non-elective procedures with UHL and in effect the CCGs paid for renal patient transport under this contract for Boston and Grantham and Skegness.

Following the notice given to the CCGs by UHL to end the transport element of the contract, the CCGs have been working to secure transport for dialysis patients for Boston, Grantham and Skegness.

A number of renal patients using the Boston, Grantham and Skegness units have written to the CCGs asking that they continue with the current transport arrangements. This is reflective of the fact that renal patients tend to build close relationships with their regular drivers.

For the Grantham Skegness units, the CCGs have commissioned transport services from Renal Services (UK) Ltd, who are planning to use the same drivers as UHL. As a result, patients should continue to receive the same transport service as they do at present. However, those who need stretcher transport will continue to receive this from TASL.

For Boston patients, Fresenius currently employs drivers directly and provides cars for non-stretcher patients. Stretcher patients are included in the TASL contract. However, when the Boston renal dialysis service transfers from Fresenius to Renal Services (UK) Ltd at the new Fishtoft Road site, the arrangements for transport will need to be confirmed. The CCGs have expressed a preference for the existing drivers to be kept.

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