

Agenda Item 7

		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

Open Report on behalf of North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust

Report to	Health Scrutiny Committee for Lincolnshire
Date:	15 September 2021
Subject:	Update on Key Developments at North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust

Summary:

The purpose of this report is to provide a clinical and strategic update to the Health Scrutiny Committee for Lincolnshire on the activities of the North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust, which manages Peterborough City Hospital, and Stamford and Rutland Hospital, as well as Hinchingsbrooke Hospital in Huntingdon.

Actions Requested:

To consider and comment on the information provided in the report.

1. Background

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Health Scrutiny Committee for Lincolnshire on the clinical and strategic developments at North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust in the past 12 months, in particular, its response to managing the Covid-19 infection across its sites.

2. Consultation

This is not a direct consultation item.

3. Clinical Update

Our Ongoing Response to Covid-19

The last 18 months have been like no other in the NHS as we have adapted and responded to manage patient care during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Trust is slowly recovering and restoring services to what has become the new 'normal'.

Patients needing hospital treatment for Covid-19 are being cared for in dedicated 'red' areas at Peterborough City and Hinchingsbrooke Hospitals. This enables the Trust to maintain a 'green' status at its Stamford and Rutland Hospital site, where outpatient and day case services continue as normal alongside the John Van Geest inpatient ward.

The number of Covid-positive patients being cared for in our hospitals dipped to single figures across both sites in May 2021, the lowest rate since the pandemic began in March 2020. However, since June, the Trust has since seen a steady increase in the number of patients with the Covid-19 infection needing hospital care. In response, the Trust has opened additional beds on both the Peterborough City and Hinchingsbrooke Hospital sites, as needed, to enable our staff to safely care for our Covid-positive patients in isolation.

The prevalence of infection in our local communities, particularly in Peterborough, remains higher than in some parts of the country and we expect to be caring for patients with Coronavirus for a considerable time yet.

In response to the growing number of Covid-19 cases in our hospitals and local communities, the Trust took the difficult, but necessary, decision to limit visiting at our hospitals over the summer. At the time of writing, visiting restrictions remain in place. This is used as a precautionary measure to reduce the spread of infection, and one that is regularly reviewed. We are aware of how hard this is for patients and their loved ones, and our ward teams are doing all they can to help patients stay connected while in hospital. Exemptions continue for patients receiving end of life care, for carers and parents of children in our care. There are no changes to existing visiting arrangements for people using our maternity services.

The impact of the virus on the running of hospital services remains significant, particularly in relation to infection control measures and staffing. In July, the Trust experienced higher-than-usual staff absence levels as a result of a greater number of staff being contacted by NHS Test and Trace, or via the Covid-19 app, and required to isolate. In addition, we had higher numbers of staff having to remain at home to care for school-age children who had been sent home to isolate due to a positive case in their class. This came at a time when more colleagues had scheduled planned leave for the summer. As a result of our staffing challenges, we had to reschedule some planned operations. The patients affected were contacted and offered our apologies and we have sought to carry out their procedures as soon as possible. We have been able to keep cancellations to a minimum thanks to the additional efforts of our staff to fill rota gaps and support our patients.

The pandemic has also impacted on how we are able to manage our waiting lists across all specialties. Each service area has conducted a review of patients waiting for an appointment or treatment and prioritised the most urgent cases. We are working with GP colleagues to ensure any escalations of deteriorating patients are addressed promptly. This work is part of a two-year recovery plan which has seen us put on weekend clinics and use private sector facilities where appropriate in order to manage growing waiting lists.

Despite social restrictions being lifted in line the Government's roadmap for recovery, on Monday 19 July 2021, the Trust is still observing strict infection prevention controls within its hospitals to continue to safeguard our patients and staff. We ask that all staff, patients, volunteers and visitors to wear a mask in our hospitals unless they are exempt. We are also continuing to encourage the use of our hand sanitising stations and observing a two-metre distance wherever possible. This remains in line with Public Health England's guidance to the NHS.

To support all our staff in these challenging times, we are regularly reminding them of the range of services they can access for emotional wellbeing and support. We are mindful of how 18 months of working in a pandemic situation can take its toll on everyone – whether they are frontline staff or support services teams. We held a week-long focus on staff health and wellbeing in mid-August to further support colleagues.

4. Stamford and Rutland Hospital Redevelopment Update

Our programme to redevelop Stamford and Rutland Hospital continues. Earlier this year the Trust accepted an offer to purchase land at the west end of the site which is surplus to the Trust's current and future needs. There has been a delay in sale proceedings due to matters of archaeological and historical interest that have emerged during the sale process. We are working with the buyer and English Heritage to complete the sale within a revised timescale. Upon completion of the sale, we will build a single storey on top of the existing ground-level car park at the Uffington Road entrance to the hospital site. This will re-provide the parking spaces lost as a result of the land sale. It will also provide additional disabled spaces and electric charging points. Planning permission has been gained for the car park development.

In addition, we are further developing our Clinical Strategy for the Stamford and Rutland Hospital site. Dr Mary-Clare Miller has been appointed as our Clinical Lead for the hospital and is working with each clinical specialty on the site to understand their needs and the services they will be able to provide for our patients in the future. This is an ongoing piece of work and I hope to be able to share an update upon completion of this review.

5. Stamford and Rutland Hospital Minor Injuries Unit

The Minor Injuries Unit at our Stamford and Rutland Hospital site will re-open on 1 October 2021 having been temporarily closed during the Coronavirus pandemic.

The Trust took the decision to close the unit in April 2020 to enable the transfer of emergency nurse practitioners to the Peterborough City Hospital site to support the Trust's pandemic response, and to help keep Stamford Hospital a Covid-free site so that outpatient clinics could continue in line with planned activity levels.

The Trust would like to thank local residents for their patience while the unit has been closed. Patients with minor illnesses should continue to seek clinical assessment and advice from their pharmacy, GP or the NHS 111 service rather than use the unit, which will be available for the treatment of injuries such as bumps, minor burns and scalds, sprains and strains, bites and stings and cuts and grazes.

6. Maternity Services

The Trust is committed to implementing the recommendations of the Ockenden Report, including new improved staffing levels in line with Birthrate Plus.

Shortages of midwifery staff across the East of England region resulted in the temporary suspension of the Trust's homebirth service on Friday 23 July 2021. This was a difficult decision, made only as the very last resort in response to unprecedented staffing shortages due to Covid-19-related absences. To keep all birthing women, and their babies, safe, we had no option but to ask them to come into hospital to have their baby.

Sadly, this issue impacted wider than our Trust, with other maternity units in our region reporting that they were in a similar position, which meant we were unable to call upon support from them to help alleviate our staffing shortages.

The Trust is grateful to its maternity teams for their hard work and dedication to support birthing women during such challenging circumstances. We would also like to thank the Peterborough and Hinchingsbrooke Maternity Voice Partnership for their support in this matter.

As soon as it is safe to do so, we will reinstate the service and are reviewing the situation daily. At the time of writing this report, we were expecting to be in a position to consider resuming the service in mid-September 2021.

7. Urgent and Emergency Care Reconfiguration at Peterborough City Hospital

A programme of work to reconfigure the urgent and emergency care facilities at Peterborough City Hospital was completed on schedule at the end of June 2021 when the Trust opened its Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC). The service relocated from the City Care Centre on Thorpe Road in Peterborough to the City Hospital site, where it is housed in a new modular unit that has been created within a courtyard in the Emergency Centre.

By co-locating the Emergency Department, UTC and GP Out Of Hours Service on the City Hospital site, we are able to provide an integrated front door for all urgent care needs for Greater Peterborough community. This allows clinical staff to be able to assess patients quickly and set them on the most appropriate pathway for their care.

The UTC team has had a busy first few months, and the Trust would like to commend staff for the way they have cared for our patients while getting used to new surroundings and new patient pathways. Some staff members who worked at UTC when it was based at the City Care Centre have transferred employment from Lincolnshire Community Health Services NHS Trust to our Trust. Their transition has been supported by North West Anglia colleagues and we would like to thank them for helping us to deliver this new pathway for our urgent care patients.

The reconfiguration work has transformed the emergency floor at Peterborough City Hospital. As well as the new UTC, this includes:

- a new resuscitation area which was originally an open space and has been refurbished as individual walled bays with ante rooms;
- a new Urgent and Emergency Care entrance and waiting area;
- a refurbished Surgical Assessment Unit which opened in April 2021; and
- a new, purpose built Paediatric Assessment Unit which opened at the end of May 2021.

8. Conclusion

The committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

9. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Mandy Ward, Head of Communications at North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust who can be contacted via mandy.ward9@nhs.net

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