


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:	16 February 2022
Subject:	Chairman's Announcements

1. Covid-19 Update

National Developments

Since the Committee's last meeting on 19 January 2022, the following main developments have been confirmed:

- From 19 January, the guidance encouraging people to work from home if they can was withdrawn
- From 20 January, face masks were no longer compulsory for secondary school pupils in school classrooms.
- From 27 January, face masks were no longer compulsory in indoor public spaces, including the communal areas of schools. However, the government suggests people continue to wear face masks in crowded and indoor spaces where people may come into contact with people they do not usually meet. The requirement for people to show their NHS Covid pass at certain venues and events was also withdrawn.
- On 31 January, it was announced that regulations making vaccines a condition of deployment for health and social care staff would be revoked, subject to public consultation and Parliamentary approval. The government also stated that it would work closely with Royal Colleges and professional regulators to strengthen guidance, and consult on updates to the Department of Health and Social Care's Code of Practice for regulated providers to strengthen the requirements in relation to COVID-19, which applies to all Care Quality Commission (CQC) registered providers of all health and social care in England.
- From 11 February, all testing requirements will be removed from all fully vaccinated travellers (both residents and visitors) arriving in the UK, but passenger locator forms would continue to be required.

Local Developments

It has been confirmed that by 31 December 2021 over 80% of the eligible Lincolnshire population had received a booster vaccination, which compares to the national average of 64%.

2. Non-Emergency Patient Transport

It has been reported in the local media that Thames Ambulance Services Ltd, the provider of non-emergency patient transport in Lincolnshire since July 2017, has launched legal challenges against Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group on the procurement process for the new contract for this service, which is due to begin from 1 July 2022.

The media report refers to the two lots of the new contract, which are call handling and patient assessment; and the provision of the service, and an original award of these two lots to two separate providers. Subsequently, the preferred provider of the call handling and patient assessment element of the service withdrew on the basis that this element of the contract would be subsidised by the other element of the contract, where the preferred bidder is the East Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust. TASL is arguing that the procurement process should be re-run.

3. Availability of NHS Dental Appointments

On 25 January 2022, the government announced funding of £50 million to secure 350,000 more dental appointments before the end of this financial year. The intention is that people suffering from oral pain, disease, and infection will get treatment, as services return to pre-pandemic levels. The Midlands NHS region has been allocated £8.9 million from this sum.

The government has stated that children, people with learning disabilities, autism, or severe mental health problems, will be prioritised. Locally, NHS teams will use the funds to secure increased capacity amongst local dentists, who as part of this scheme will be paid more than a third on top of their normal fee for delivering this care outside of core hours, such as early morning and weekend work.

During the pandemic, the NHS has protected dentists' income when strict infection prevention control guidance meant dentists needed to operate at severely reduced capacity. Infection prevention control measures were significantly eased in November 2021 and since the start of this year the NHS has required dental practices to operate at 85% of their pre-pandemic contracted activity.

4. Healthwatch Lincolnshire Live Panel Event: Dental Services in Lincolnshire

At the Committee's last meeting, it was reported that Healthwatch Lincolnshire would be holding an online live panel event from 10 am to 11 am on 26 January 2022, to provide patients the opportunity to ask the questions that about their dental care in Lincolnshire.

Healthwatch Lincolnshire has announced that the event on 26 January could not proceed owing to the availability of panel members and has rescheduled the event for 30 March, again from 10 am until 11 am. Healthwatch has stated that it is grateful for the questions received, and information would be provided in response.

5. Volunteer Support for People in Mental Health Crisis

Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (LPFT) has announced that as part of its work to support and improve the mental health crisis care offered in Lincolnshire, three new night light cafés in have been opened in Gainsborough, Grantham and Spalding. There are already ten night light cafes already open in Lincoln.

LPFT has explained that night light cafés are safe spaces that offer an out-of-hours, non-clinical support service and are staffed by teams of trained volunteers who are available to listen. Night light cafés can also provide signposting advice and information on other organisations that may be able to help with specific needs, such as debt advice or emergency food parcels. They can provide users with somewhere to go and something to do before they reach a mental health crisis, which helps reduce the requirement for public services involvement. People are asked to call or send a quick message to book in advance to make sure someone is available to listen and help at the café. Agencies or GPs can also refer individuals, with their consent, by completing an online referral form.

Night light cafés are funded by NHS England and NHS Improvement as an integral part of the Lincolnshire Mental Health Transformation Programme, which is committed to improving mental health and wellbeing by creating opportunities for people to thrive in connected communities.

The cafés are co-ordinated by Acts Trust in Lincoln (www.actstrust.org.uk) in partnership with other local charities who provide the venues around the county. On average, almost 29 guests a week visited a night light café during 2021 and during the pandemic Acts Trust made over 1,000 phone calls to people who needed support, or a friendly ear to listen to them. Night light cafés allow people to have better access to face-to-face help when they are struggling in an evening, when practices and community mental health teams are less readily available.

Acts Trust is now working in partnership with existing charities in Stamford, Bourne, and Long Sutton with venues also being sought in Skegness and Boston.

6. Mental Health Crisis Assessment Centre

Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (LPFT) has also announced plans to open a new urgent assessment centre by the end of January, which would enable patients with a mental health related crisis to be taken directly to, or walk-in at, a dedicated centre in Lincoln, rather than going to A&E, as currently. This initiative will support the wider Lincolnshire health and care system in reducing demand in local emergency departments, as data show that around 70% of people attending A&E, with a mental health concern, do not have a physical health care need.

LPFT has also stated that sometimes A&E departments cannot always provide the calming, therapeutic environment for people in crisis, and Lincolnshire will be leading the way as one of just a handful of trusts nationally trialling this service. LPFT's aim is to enable people to access support and get the care they need at the point they need it.

7. Appointment of Interim Chair of the Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board

On 28 January 2022, the Lincolnshire Integrated Care System (ICS) announced that Sir Andrew Cash, OBE, had been appointed by NHS England as the Interim Chair of Lincolnshire's new NHS Integrated Care Board (ICB).

Lincolnshire ICS brings together local health and care organisations, local government, and voluntary and community organisations to improve the health and wellbeing of the population, tackle health inequalities, increase value for money for the taxpayer, and contribute more social and economic value in the county.

The proposed NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) will, subject to the passage of legislation through Parliament, be formally established on 1 July 2022 to oversee the commissioning, performance, financial management and transformation of the local NHS. It will also subsume the responsibilities of the NHS Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group, which will close down on 30 June.

Sir Andrew Cash is currently the system lead for the South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw ICS. He is also deputy chair of the NHS Confederation, a membership body which represents NHS organisations across England. Prior to that, Sir Andrew Cash held several NHS chief executive and senior leadership roles in the NHS, and was most recently until 2018 the Chief Executive of the Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. Andrew has also served as Director General for Provider Development in the Department of Health.

8. Lincolnshire Health and Care Collaborative – Chief Executive

On 31 January 2022 it was announced that following a competitive recruitment process, Peter Noble had been appointed as Managing Director for the Lincolnshire Health and Care Collaborative, with effect from 1 April 2022.

Peter Noble has worked for Newcastle Health Innovation Partners, a large Academic Health Science Centre in the North East, where he has held the role of Chief Operating Officer. Prior to that Peter has worked for the Science and Technology Research Council, universities in both the UK and overseas, as well as a number of NHS organisations.

A provider collaborative is defined by NHS England and NHS Improvement as an entity focused on two or more NHS trusts or NHS foundations trusts. They can involve a range of partners and will become a requirement to support the new Integrated Care System arrangements. The Lincolnshire Health and Care Collaborative (LHCC) has evolved from a previous provider alliance comprising Lincolnshire Community Health Services NHS Trust, Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust and the Lincolnshire Primary Care Network Alliance. The LHCC has been developing its membership and now includes Lincolnshire County Council and the Lincolnshire Care Association.

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