

JOINT HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 JULY 2020 NHS RESPONSE TO COVID-19

During this time of national emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic we have seen unprecedented changes and challenges for the NHS and social care.

We wanted to update you on the local response to COVID-19 and our recovery plans. This briefing note and presentation provide an overview. During the committee meeting we will have representatives from across the NHS who will provide more detailed information and answer questions.

Local response to COVID-19

All agencies in Dorset and nationally have been working together to take all the necessary steps to contain and delay the spread of the virus. In line with the Government's coronavirus action plan, we set up a Dorset multi-agency strategic co-ordination group – Health and Care Silver – to coordinate the urgent health and care response to protect the health, safety and welfare of patients, staff and the public. This group brings together agencies including both local authorities, Dorset Council and Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council, Public Health Dorset, and NHS providers to co-ordinate our local response across the whole of Dorset.

Preparing for surges and changes to services

In March, all NHS organisations received a letter from NHS England which mandated the way in which the NHS needed to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, following the NHS' declaration of a Level 4 National Incident on 30 January 2020. A number of actions were detailed in the letter, and Dorset responded accordingly whilst maintaining patient and public safety.

Our response included:

- Stopping routine elective treatment;
- Stopping face to face outpatient appointments;
- Emptying of hospital beds;
- Stopping Continuing Healthcare Assessments and created a joint discharge team;
- Preparing for surge in cases and need for increased critical care beds;
- Explored Nightingale option for super surge in critical care beds;
- Physical partitioning and directional flow around areas of the hospitals;
- Increase of ventilation equipment and oxygen supply;
- Creation of Covid and non-Covid areas of hospitals;
- Creation of Covid and non-Covid GP Practices and areas of practices;
- PPE Cell created to manage stock and distribution;
- Testing Cell created to oversee increased testing requirements;
- Clinical Cell to agree clinical pathways;
- Staff to work remotely where possible;
- Increase use of technology, e-consult, 111.nhs.uk, telephone & video consultations
- Additional support to care homes.

In March the Chancellor committed that 'Whatever extra resources our NHS needs to cope with coronavirus – it will get'. Sir Simon Stephens (NHS England Chief Executive) and Amanda Pritchard (NHS England Chief Operating Officer) confirmed, in their joint letter of 17th March, that 'financial constraints must not and will not stand in the way ...'. Dorset has acted in accordance with subsequent guidance to ensure that financial and governance measures were in place to support the response. The NHS bodies have each been spending about £1m a month in response to covid-19 in Dorset, with significant costs providing sickness cover and extra staffing to deal with the pandemic, as well as an accelerated hospital

discharge programme and the provision of PPE. Robust governance procedures are in place and the additional expenditure is subject to national scrutiny and audit.

Phase 2 – recovery planning

We are taking a coordinated approach as a Dorset ICS in the recovery phase of COVID-19, in line with national guidance. We are working closely together across health and social care during this recovery phase. The Dorset Local Resilience Forum have set up the Recovery Coordination Group for this. Led by Dorset Council's Executive Director of Place John Sellgren, the group has representation from all organisations across the Local Resilience Forum.

Public engagement

As always, public engagement is a key component of our approach for our organisations. We continue to work as partner organisations, to maintain strong relationships with community groups and organisations, continually exploring opportunities for collaborative working.

We continue to share key message with the public including through our #HereForYou campaign highlighting that services are open.