

## Primary Care in Southampton

October 2021

### 1. Context

- 1.1. This report summarises the CCGs work programmes related to delegated Primary Care commissioning functions in Southampton, and includes a brief summary of some key achievements, priorities, and plans for the future.
- 1.2. Primary care is currently very busy and meeting the needs of more patients now than ever before. The method of seeing patients has widened, supporting access, with telephone and online consultations becoming more widely used in GP practices following new ways of working during the COVID-19 pandemic. All GP practices have continued to offer face-to-face appointments throughout the pandemic when clinically appropriate to do so, and this remains the case today.
- 1.3. Patients who are COVID-19 positive remain able to receive face-to-face appointments with a GP or primary care health practitioner in a safe setting, if clinically necessary. These appointments take place at a 'hot site', located at the Portswood Surgery site on Belmont Road, Portswood. Patients of Solent GP Surgery, who would normally use the site, can use the Nicholstown Surgery site for face-to-face appointments.
- 1.4. At present there are 26 GP practices in Southampton, running out of 37 sites, serving a population of 290,000.
- 1.5. Commissioning arrangements remain as before, with the CCG receiving delegated responsibility from NHS England. Within the newly merged CCG, primary care is handled at a Southampton 'place' based level, which reports to a CCG-wide Primary Care Commissioning Committee. These new governance arrangements for commissioning do not represent a significant change. A larger CCG has allowed for better and more streamlined ways of working, such as learning from best practice of other areas and closer working across boundaries.
- 1.6. There are a number of exciting developments in primary care in Southampton. The projects mentioned below are the result of close collaboration between commissioners, GP practices, Primary Care Networks (PCNs), wider NHS providers, and the voluntary sector.

### 2. Development of Primary Care Networks (PCNs)

- 2.1. In 2019 NHS England launched its new Five Year Primary Care Contract Framework and the associated Directly Enhanced Service for Primary Care Networks (PCN DES). These arrangements have led to the development of six PCNs in the city which bring together groups of local GP practices to work

collaboratively to support primary care resilience, promote access and develop more integrated models of care working with other local health and care providers.

- 2.2. There are significant additional investments associated with PCNs, the largest of which is to fund additional roles, via the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme. These new roles include pharmacists, social prescribers and physiotherapists (among others) which will grow capacity in primary care services and broaden the range of services available to patients.

### 3. Appointments in primary care

- 3.1. All practices are offering face to face, online and telephone urgent and routine appointments for patients.
- 3.2. Whereas nationally rules around shops and non-clinical settings have now been relaxed, the NHS in England continues to follow Public Health England's infection prevention control guidelines.
- 3.3. This means NHS guidance remains in place across all health services including hospitals, GP practices, dental practices, optometrists and pharmacies to ensure patients and staff are protected. Staff, patients and visitors will also be expected to continue to follow social distancing rules when visiting any care setting as well as using face coverings, mask and other personal protection equipment. It is very important that in healthcare settings, we do all we can to reduce the risk of infection for our staff and those who need our care.
- 3.4. GP practices are offering face-to-face appointments when it is clinically appropriate to do so, but are also handling queries from patients via telephone and online (through e-Consult). GP practices locally are encouraging patients to use E-consult in the first instance if they are confident internet users.
- 3.5. Across Hampshire and Isle of Wight, the data for July 2021 for appointments at GP practices is as follows:
  - Total appointments with a GP practice given: 735,035
  - GP appointments: 357,515
  - Other appointments with healthcare professionals: 353,564
  - Did not attend: 27,439
  - Same day appointment given: 338,385
  - Next day appointment given: 61,141
  - 2-7 days appointment given: 145,744
  - Face-to-face appointments given: 413,000
  - GP home visits: 5,582
  - Telephone calls: 290,292

- Video/online: 4,484

E-consult appointments are in addition to the above and for many practices this represents a significant level of activity with some larger practices receiving several hundreds of e-consults each week.

#### 4. Vaccination programme in primary care

4.1. The Government announced its plans for the current phase of the COVID-19 vaccination programme as part of its wider autumn and winter strategy, which is now being delivered through numerous routes, including primary care. Details of who is eligible for the vaccine are as follows:

- People aged over 16 who are yet to receive a first or second COVID-19 vaccination dose remain eligible. Even if you have previously declined the opportunity of a vaccine, the offer is still open for you to get the jab should you wish to.
- The vaccine is also now being offered to people between the ages of 12 and 15. Parental, guardian or carer consent will be sought by vaccination healthcare staff prior to vaccination of anyone aged 12 to 15. This cohort is receiving the vaccination primarily through the School Immunisations team, provided by Solent NHS Trust.
- We continue to identify and offer the vaccination to those aged 12 to 15 who either live with someone who is more likely to get infections or have a condition that means they're at high risk from COVID-19.
- We also continue to identify and offer a third jab to people aged 12 and over who are immunosuppressed following updated guidance from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).
- A booster jab is available to people who have previously received two vaccine doses to ensure continued protection for those most at risk. The booster is being offered to people in priority groups 1 - 9 identified by the JCVI. National guidance states that the booster should be offered no earlier than six months after the second dose. The NHS will contact people when it is time for them to receive the booster vaccination.

#### 5. Contract developments – Living Well Partnership

5.1. The CCG recently received an application from The Living Well Partnership to merge its two contracts with the CCG together into one. The Living Well Partnership provides GP services locally to its 38,000 patients from a number of surgery sites. One GP practice is within the city of Southampton, east of the River Itchen, and operates from five surgery sites. The other GP practice, St. Luke's and Botley Surgeries, has sites in Hedge End and Botley.

5.2. The two practices already work together within one Primary Care Network (PCN). A PCN brings GP practices together to work at scale to provide a wide range of services to patients and to integrate with other health and care service providers.

- 5.3. The Living Well Partnership has operated the two practices with one clinical and management team. It has requested to merge the two practices together into one NHS contract from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021, and the CCG has approved its application.
- 5.4. This means the two separate NHS General Medical Services (GMS) contracts held by The Living Well Partnership will now merge into one. By merging the separate NHS contracts, which currently use two different IT systems to manage records and work with patients, there will now be one system.
- 5.5. The benefits of a contract merger will reduce the administrative work for both clinical and non-clinical staff and free up time and resources for the practice clinical team to see and treat patients.
- 5.6. The CCG received feedback from the public about the proposal and issues raised during this, such as patient access and concern over travel, were considered by the GP practice and the committee.
- 5.7. The contract merger does not mean any site will be closed and patients will still be able to use their local site. Patients registered with either practice will not experience changes to the GP services they receive or to the services they are referred to by their GP.

## 6. Estate developments

### Shirley Health Partnership

- 6.1. Shirley Health Partnership (the Partnership) currently occupies the ground floor of Shirley Health Centre in Grove Road, Southampton. This is a short distance from the main retail area along Shirley Road.
- 6.2. Shirley Health Centre is owned by NHS Property Services. The building dates back to the 1970s. As it stands, the building is outdated and not configured in a way suitable to meet the demands of modern integrated health and care.
- 6.3. With regard to the Partnership's current patient list of around 14,000 patients (and expected to grow to over 16,000 by 2030), the site is too small. There is also a pressing need to provide additional space to allow for the expansion of locality-based services such as Steps2Wellbeing ("talking therapies"), community midwifery services, and an array of Primary Care Network services for west Southampton – e.g. social prescriber, first contact physiotherapist, pharmacist.
- 6.4. During 2017 and 2018, the feasibility of redeveloping the existing building was examined. Due to practical issues, such as considerable logistical challenges with redeveloping an operational health centre, redevelopment on the existing site was not taken forward. This prompted the Partnership to consider relocating

to a new site in the locality and to investigate this further the Partnership sought the advice of a specialist property firm – Haven Health Properties.

- 6.5. In the Spring of 2020, and with the assistance of Haven, the Partnership identified a suitable site 1/3rd mile away at 355 Shirley Road. The site had recently been vacated by Lidl who had moved to new, larger premises nearby. The Partnership and Haven jointly developed outline proposals to convert the empty supermarket building into a modern, functional health centre that would meet all the required technical, regulatory and environmental standards.
- 6.6. Having reviewed the high-level plans, the CCG agreed that the relocation option warranted further more detailed consideration and the Partnership was invited to bring forward, with Haven's assistance, a more detailed business case. The detailed business case and supporting floorplans, schedules of accommodation and costings were received from the Partnership in December 2020 and reviewed by the CCG in January 2021.
- 6.7. The Partnership was advised that the proposal was broadly supported by the CCG subject to a number of important caveats including an engagement exercise to establish patient views on the proposed relocation and an application to the City Council for change of use planning permission.
- 6.8. The Partnership engaged with its patient population over its proposal. They have received a response to their survey from 2,253 of their patients. This is around 16% of the Partnership's patient population. Of these, 1,994 (89%) would support a move to a new purpose built health centre in Shirley.
- 6.9. Planning permission was approved earlier this year, and the CCG has also formally supported the proposal.

### **New facility for population in central Southampton**

- 6.10. As part of the proposals to make more use of existing space on the Royal South Hants Hospital site the CCG is currently considering options for development of a significant Primary Care facility on the site. This is a long term project and the Panel were updated on its progress at the August 2021 meeting.

### **Highfield Health move to new premises**

- 6.11. Highfield Health is a GP practice located in the Highfield area of the city. In July the surgery moved to a new location, at 38 Highfield Road, remaining in the same area of the city serving the same patients. Its previous location, on the University of Southampton Highfield campus, is being redeveloped and therefore the university supported the practice to move to new and refurbished accommodation. The new site on Highfield Road had previously been a branch site for Mulberry House Surgery.

- 6.12. Located conveniently between the University's Highfield and Avenue campuses, this new location provides larger, newly renovated premises that enables the practice to continue to offer a high quality service to its patients and remain at the heart of the Highfield community.

## **7. Patient feedback and satisfaction**

- 7.1. This year's patient survey results were published in July 2021, based on research which took place during January – March 2021.
- 7.2. It is encouraging that local patients rate their GP practices largely in-line with the national averages, but we accept some practices show disappointing results for patient satisfaction. Every year in Southampton we share best practice of those practices who score very highly so that practices can learn from each other. Where practices are scoring below expectations, we are working with them to better understand and improve the patient experience. It is important to note that the CCG and all GP practices want to reduce the inequalities that have been exposed by the pandemic. We also recognise this has been an exceptionally challenging year for everyone, including patients and GP practice staff.