

St Helens – Winter Plan overview - Primary Care

The CCG is working very closely with primary care to ensure that they are able to deliver a resilient service over winter. The CCG has fortnightly meetings with the Clinical Directors of each of the Primary Care Networks (PCNs) and in addition, GP practices now meet regularly to discuss service provision. These meetings include other system providers to work on pathways jointly (such as frailty, care home support, effective collaboration between community nurses and primary care etc. Primary Care has moved to a total triage model, with many appointments now being remote. However, face to face appointments should be made available where necessary and practices must remain open to its patients. This is being monitored by the CCG. In addition, we have provided communications materials for patients about primary care new way of working so that our population understand the effectiveness of a remote consultation.

Care homes – Each care home in the borough is aligned to a primary care network and has a named primary care clinical lead. Weekly check ins take place with each home, and this will become more of a multi-disciplinary check in as additional roles are appointed within PCNs. This includes ensuring that structured medication reviews are taking place and advanced care planning is undertaken.

Sustainability LES – In the last quarter of 2019/20 each GP practice undertook an audit of A&E admissions that could otherwise have been managed in primary care. As a result, each developed an action plan of potential changes to manage these conditions. Due to Covid, some of these changes did not happen by the original deadline, but the CCG will now work with primary care to refocus those action plans

Flu – The CCG and primary care recognise that flu clinics are likely to be more problematic this year due to social distancing and having so many vulnerable patients. Combined with an expanded campaign, and the need to vaccinate as many people as possible, it is critical that we get this campaign right. We are working with many practices on a mass vaccination campaign at Saints Rugby Club, coordinated by the CCG but run by practice staff using practice vaccines.

Business continuity – Each practice has submitted their business continuity plan to the CCG to ensure that they remain resilient in the event that practice staff either test positive for Covid or are required to isolate if necessary due to contact tracing. The CCG are working with practices on these to identify risks identified and how these can be overcome on a network basis.

Management of Covid patients – Each practice has arrangements to deal with management of Covid or suspect Covid patients. Many use a hot hub facility at Albion Street, which the practices manage themselves, but it allows patients to be seen in a safer setting. Where practices do not use the hot hub, they have practice arrangements for seeing suspect Covid patients safely. The CCG has commissioned a second visiting car to support home visits for this cohort of people and this will continue until the end of October, when a review of the service will be undertaken.

Shielding Patients – Whilst patients aren't formally shielding now, practices are continuing to manage their most vulnerable patients closely. Appointments are remote where possible. Practices are maintaining their shielding lists in the event that an area is lockdown and further support is needed.

Additional roles – Each PCN is starting to recruit in to additional roles that are allowed under the Network DES. This includes pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, Physician Associates, OTs,

podiatrists, social prescribers etc. These roles will form a key part of Primary Care resilience over the winter. Each Network has developed a recruitment plan and they are working to recruit roles as quickly as possible, some have made key appointments.