



NEWS BULLETIN

Buckinghamshire Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care System

16 April 2020

ICS Response to COVID-19

All partners within the BOB ICS are working together to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic - to provide mutual aid and support and to ensure we are prepared to meet the challenges of an unfolding situation. Through Fiona Wise, Executive Lead for BOB ICS, partners are also represented at the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum (LRF). LRFs are multi-agency partnerships made up of representatives from local public services, including the emergency services, local authorities, the NHS, the Environment Agency and others. Together we have been responding to the COVID-19 pandemic in a number of ways, with a focus on supporting colleagues working in all care settings within our Integrated Care System.

Preventing the Spread of Infection

We continue to promote public health messages to encourage people to stay at home, use social distancing when out and to give advice on what to do should they experience symptoms. Key sources of information continue to be:

- www.gov.uk/coronavirus for general information including travel advice
- www.nhs.uk/coronavirus for information and advice about the infection, symptoms and advice to reduce risk of infection
- www.nhse.uk/coronavirus for information for clinicians

Maintaining and ensuring supplies of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) to frontline services is a challenge that we are all working together to address – this includes providing mutual aid across all health and care organisations, including social, residential and domiciliary care.

Staff testing remains a priority. Our focus is on ensuring colleagues across health and care can be tested and we are exploring ways that we can increase our testing capacity across sites within the BOB patch.

Maintaining Critical Services

All ICS partners are working together to be as prepared as possible for any increase in demand for services, and any need to change the way we work as a result of the current Covid-19 national emergency. A significant amount of planning and preparation is taking place, seven days a week, to ensure we are as ready as we can be to meet the challenges we are facing. This preparation involves not just securing extra capacity for patients who have Covid-19, but also finding new ways of looking after patients with other conditions and illnesses who will still need care.

There has been a great response from primary care which has radically changed the way GP practices are working. Total triage is in place with all patients instructed to phone their practice first. Appointments are being conducted via video consultations, online consultations and over the phone wherever possible and only those patients who really need to attend a GP surgery in person are being asked to do so. Primary care is still open and working for those who don't have COVID-19 and we are actively encouraging people to access healthcare services when needed.

Several new clinics to support patients with suspected or confirmed coronavirus are now open. They aim to ease the burden on other healthcare facilities and free up hospital doctors to deal with more urgent coronavirus cases. The clinics are for those people who are showing symptoms of Coronavirus but don't need immediate hospital treatment. Access to this service will only be available to patients who have already gone through a structured medical assessment. Practices are also focusing on ensuring that all shielded patients (those at highest risk) are identified, supported and flagged on GPs systems. The NHS is continuing to provide urgent and emergency dental care, which is available to both NHS and private patients. In the evening and at weekends patients can contact NHS 111 who will provide advice and direct patients to an out-of-hours service if necessary. Work is underway to also set up Urgent Dental Care hubs.

The Future Arrangements for NHS Commissioning

Recruitment to a single AO/ICS Lead Role

Interviews have been held for the single Accountable Officer/ICS Lead role and a preferred candidate has been identified. An announcement will be made in the coming weeks once we know the start date of the new post holder.

Interim Accountable Officer arrangements for Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire CCGs

Fiona Wise, Executive Lead for the BOB ICS, has taken on the interim role of Accountable Officer for Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire CCGs from 1st April 2020. Fiona will continue in her ICS leadership role, and so will be supported by Diane Hedges and Robert Majilton who will continue to provide leadership to Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire CCGs on a day-to-day basis as the two CCGs' Deputy Chief Officers.

The development of a single, integrated management team to support the three CCGs

Plans for a formal HR consultation process for affected staff have been put on pause. This decision has been taken to protect the wellbeing of colleagues so that all can continue to focus efforts on COVID-19 and other work, without the added distraction and worry of any formal HR process. A decision about the start date of the formal staff consultation will be made by Fiona Wise together with the CCG Clinical Chairs and Vice Lay Chairs.

Updated National Guidance Published on CCG Mergers

As you are aware, an engagement exercise was run towards the end of 2019 to gather feedback on work to explore options for the streamlining NHS commissioning arrangements, including a single CCG. We have received national guidance that any work should be put on hold to help release capacity to support the response to COVID-19. Therefore a merger by April 2021 is not being considered. Until any decision is made each CCG will continue as a statutory organisation. This does not affect the plans described above for a single management team.