

STOP PRESS



Joint working during coronavirus provides strong foundations

Health and Care leaders across Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire (BSW) have said they will build on the innovative joint working between CCGs, hospitals, community care providers, primary care, local authorities and the voluntary sector that has taken place during the coronavirus pandemic as they work towards becoming an Integrated Care System by April 2021.

Since the start of the coronavirus outbreak at the beginning of March, health and care providers across BSW have been collaborating in innovative ways to ensure a joined up response to the crisis.

Examples of this include a multi-partner approach to dealing with coronavirus in care homes, the rapid co-development of an ethical framework to provide the best possible care to patients during the pandemic, a responsive approach to the way beds were managed across our acute and community hospitals and establishing three community hubs to support vulnerable people.

Now system leaders are looking to ensure the great work that has taken place recently is carried forward as the BSW Partnership evolves into an Integrated Care System by next April.

Tracey Cox, Senior Responsible Officer for the BSW Partnership said the innovative approach to joint system working over the past few months had been a real step forwards.

"Health and care partners across BSW have been working closely together for some time to improve service quality, improve the health and wellbeing of our local population and deliver financial stability.

"Working together in a seamlessly integrated manner has always been central to our approach to health and care and, since the start of the coronavirus outbreak in March, we have really seen integrated care in action.

"I've been greatly encouraged to see how quickly partners responded and collaborated to jointly address the many problems the crisis brought about and am confident this approach will be carried forward as we develop towards becoming an Integrated Care System."

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Q&A: Stephanie Elsy, BSW Partnership Independent Chair



Stephanie Elsy, BSW's recently appointed Independent Chair, took up her position at the end of last year and has certainly taken up the reins at an interesting time.

Stephanie has worked in public services for over 30 years in the health, local government and voluntary sectors. She took some time recently to answer a few questions and let us know how she is settling into her new role.

What are your first impressions of the BSW Partnership?

I have been hugely impressed with the professionalism, commitment and collaborative spirit of everyone I have met since I started. I managed to visit a number of acute and community settings before coronavirus and was really pleased to see the incredibly high standards of care.

What do you see as the main strengths of the health and care system in BSW?

Our biggest strength and asset is, of course our people. The dedication and skills of our nurses, doctors, allied health professionals, support staff, social workers, care workers, and volunteers are second to none. We have some truly world class services and everyone wants to do the best for our population as had been demonstrated by their fantastic response to coronavirus.

All our system leaders have worked together as one team. I am immensely proud of how BSW has responded.

What do you see as the main challenges our health and care system faces as it move towards becoming an Integrated Care System?

Our biggest challenge currently is tackling the backlog of care that was put on hold during coronavirus. We have had to adapt all our systems to cater for the needs of social distancing in the new world of providing care. Our system leaders have produced a truly innovative plan to re-start our services so that we can keep patients and staff safe. Our providers were already under demand pressure prior to coronavirus and we need to re-start services taking into account that cases could increase again. In addition, our local councils are facing huge financial pressures due to lost income and extra costs. I am working closely with our council leaders to raise this issue with government and ask for some short term help.

Coronavirus will have a massive impact on our health and care system, what legacy do you believe it will leave for the BSW Partnership?

Coronavirus is probably going to be with us for a very long time and we have had to adapt the way we work with patients and local communities to accommodate this. In some respects this has been really beneficial: using technology – even just the telephone - much more in primary and secondary care will almost certainly stay with us. Patients like it and it can make our services much more productive and efficient – which is good for everyone. But the coronavirus response from a system perspective has been fantastic. People from different parts of the system who did not know each other that well have had to work together closely and that has transformed relationships for the better. I am confident that will help us to go forward and become an even stronger and more effective partnership.

Strategy sets out how digital technology will help health and care



BSW Partnership has set out a road map for how it plans to use digital technology to help people living across the area, provide better care and use its resources in a more effective and efficient way.

The plans are highlighted in a recently published digital strategy which outlines the important role IT and digital technology will play in meeting the future health needs of people living in BSW.

The strategy focuses on three important themes which are all designed to enable digital technology to support the local vision of working together to empower people to live their best life.

The first priority focuses on better ways of sharing patient information in integrated care records. This will mean different health and care providers – for example a hospital, a GP surgery or a community care provider - will all be able to access a patient's health records, saving time and making it easier to put treatment plans in place. Joined up information will also mean commissioners, service leads and clinicians can plan services for our population more effectively.

The second priority is to provide health and care staff working across BSW with the right tools to enable them to do their jobs properly and have access to the latest, up to date technology they need.

This will mean colleagues providing care and support in BSW will be able to carry out more virtual consultations with patients and manage their time more effectively.

The final priority is to raise our overall level of IT security by working collectively to ensure our systems and the information we keep is secure and safe.

The strategy also highlights that a significant amount of digitally-driven change has taken place over the last few months as health and care providers across BSW rose to the challenges posed by coronavirus. In a short space of time, thousands of consultations were conducted by video that would have been previously held face to face and entire teams moved out of offices and started working remotely.

Jason Young, Assistant Director of Digital Transformation said the new digital strategy was an important development in terms of making sure partners across BSW have the technology they need in order to provide the best health and care services to local people.

“The digital projects we will be focusing on will help to deliver care more effectively and efficiently, contribute to financial stability and improve the quality of care for people living in BSW.”

BSW digital strategy key themes:

- Integrated care records and better ways of sharing patient information
- Providing BSW health and care staff with the right tools
- Raising our overall level of IT security

Clap for carers planned to mark NHS birthday



People across BSW are being urged to take part in a final 'clap of thanks' for the NHS and key workers.

Millions of people across the country joined in the original Clap For Carers at 8pm every Thursday evening during the first weeks of the coronavirus pandemic, with the last official event taking place at the end of May.

Now health and care leaders are urging local people to show their support by applauding once more at 5pm on July 5 - the 72nd anniversary of the NHS.

On 4 July, the evening before, people will be asked to put a light in their windows in remembrance of all those lost to the coronavirus pandemic.

Everybody will be encouraged to stop what they're doing and join with others - following social distancing - in their streets or neighbourhoods to applaud not just the NHS and other key workers but all those who have volunteered or helped to keep services and community networks going.

An open letter from event organisers the Together Foundation, signed by NHS Chief Executive Simon Stevens and many others, encourages as many people as possible to get involved.

"We are asking everyone to return to their doorsteps on the 5th of July as people did every Thursday, not just to show their appreciation for NHS and key workers but also to show that we are all still there for each other, now and in the coming months.

"So as we mark the NHS's birthday we want to say a huge thank you on behalf of the whole NHS to all those who have played their part in tackling this horrible coronavirus pandemic."

Working together to fight coronavirus

Hospitals, local authorities, the third sector, primary care and key partner organisations across Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire are working collaboratively to make sure we maintain critical services and support the most vulnerable people in our communities during the coronavirus pandemic. Here's just a few of the ways we've helped:

7,131

outpatient appointments carried out by video



17

weekly webinars for GPs to share information and ideas to support their response to coronavirus



15,812

hours of domiciliary (home) care provided



Find out other ways the BSW Partnership has risen to the challenge of coronavirus at www.bswstp.nhs.uk/news

BSW backs joint local commitment to tackle racism and promote equality

BSW partner organisations have been demonstrating their commitment to tackle racism and promote equality in response to the #BlackLivesMatter campaign.

This month a number of BSW partners including the CCG, Bath & North East Somerset Council and the RUH joined other B&NES-based organisations including Curo, the University of Bath, Bath Spa University, Avon and Somerset Police and Avon Fire and Rescue Service in pledging to redouble their efforts to tackle racism following the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

“As individual organisations we stand in solidarity with our black staff members, patients, residents- including our students- and communities, and all those who have felt hurt,

anger and shock,” the statement says.

The statement also emphasises the importance of tackling health inequalities across BSW in light of coronavirus.

“As a multi-agency group co-ordinating our response to coronavirus, we are also very concerned that the evidence shows how those with a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) background are more likely to die from coronavirus. We must continue our work on addressing inequalities.”

The BSW Partnership is also working with Directors for Public Health at local authorities to get a better understanding of the impact of coronavirus and health inequalities in local communities.

Voluntary groups help shielded patients



Voluntary organisations and community groups have pulled together like never before to help local health and care organisations provide support to shielded and at risk people across BSW during the coronavirus crisis.

In Bath and North East Somerset, voluntary sector group 3SG in partnership with Virgin Care, B&NES Council and BSW CCG set up the Compassionate Community Hub reaching out to the vulnerable and isolated to provide help with food deliveries, medicine, urgent housing, mental health and wellbeing and money matters.

3SG have recruited and managed 2,500 volunteers and over 1,100 tasks have been completed supporting the most vulnerable to help with food shopping, collection of medicines and befriending calls.

Voluntary Action Swindon has been carrying out similar work, joining forces with Swindon Borough Council to match volunteers with people in need to assist with tasks such as collecting shopping or just offering a sympathetic ear to someone in need.

Meanwhile in Wiltshire, the Wiltshire Wellbeing Hub, set up by Wiltshire Council as a response to coronavirus, has delivered over 1,000 food parcels to vulnerable residents.

Cllr Laura Mayes, Cabinet member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Public Protection at Wiltshire Council said: "The Wiltshire Wellbeing Hub has been a vital tool in helping vulnerable residents and I'm delighted we've been able to help so many."

Q&A: Dr Febin Basheer, GP, Victoria Cross Surgery Swindon



Dr Febin Basheer is a GP based at the Victoria Cross Surgery in Swindon and Clinical Director for Brunel Health Group Primary Care Network. She has been a GP since 2011 and has been a GP representative on Swindon CCG's Governing Body. She is one of many front line primary care workers who, since the start of the coronavirus outbreak, have risen to the challenge as surgeries and clinics across BSW have continued to provide services to their patients and local populations through innovation, determination and sheer hard work. She took some time out of her busy day to reflect on the past few months.

How do you think primary care has risen to the challenges posed by coronavirus?

Coronavirus has acted as a catalyst for collaboration between community services, social care, primary and secondary care, which has been a great thing. I also think the advances digital technology has brought about in terms of the way we triage patients and carry out consultations over video and the phone, has been another great step forwards

The response from the local health and care system as a whole has also been exemplary in the way that we rose to the challenge to meet demand through initiatives such as setting up 'hot clinics' for managing people with suspected symptoms of coronavirus and members of their households.

What do you think will be the lasting positive legacy of coronavirus for primary care?

For me, the current pandemic has highlighted just how much local practices working together as Primary Care Networks can achieve. We have shown that having a collective voice has more of a positive impact than lone voices and there is a very high and encouraging level of trust between practices.

Another long lasting legacy will be that there has been as much emphasis on mental health services over the past few months as there has been on physical health and that is an important step forwards.

What lessons do you believe primary care and the wider health and care system has learnt from coronavirus?

I think we've learned a lot. I think we've learned that local initiatives can tailor services to address the needs of the community and how reacting quickly through fast innovation and proper governance structures can often be effective without the old bureaucratic way of doing things.

I also think we've learned about the importance of a flexible, mobile, clinical workforce working together using digital technology as an enabler. For me, that is something we need to keep hold of and utilise as we look towards the future.