

STOP PRESS

Your essential guide to what's going on across our Sustainability and Transformation Partnership

November 2020



Keep using services and attending appointments, local people advised

Health and care leaders from across Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire (BSW) have urged local people to keep using services and attending appointments during the current national lockdown, including attending flu vaccination clinics.

Unlike the first lockdown period in March and April, much more of the NHS plans to stay open over the coming weeks including services such as scans and blood tests, some pre-planned surgery and ongoing cancer care.

Planned flu vaccination clinics are also going ahead.

Following the recent announcement of a second lockdown, leaders from BSW Partnership organisations took to social media to reassure the public that no one should be put off attending their appointments, especially if it related to a serious condition such as cancer.

Dr Ruth Grabham, Medical Director of BSW Clinical Commissioning Group, said: "While the rest of the country goes back into lockdown, the NHS will remain open for those who need it."

Dr Grabham also stressed the importance of looking after physical and mental wellbeing during the coming weeks.

"It's crucial that no one ignores the signs of poor mental health, some of which may become more apparent during the four-week lockdown.

I would encourage everyone to take the opportunity to exercise outdoors, which is permitted, as much as possible as this can help us manage our mental health."

Meanwhile as health and care service providers continue to prepare for winter, BSW Partnership has recruited a Winter Director, Alan Sheward, to coordinate a system-wide response to the expected pressures over the coming months.

Inside this issue:

- BSW Partnership takes next steps to integrated health and care
- Local authorities publish plans for winter social care
- Voluntary sector in BSW supports vulnerable during second lockdown

BSW Partnership takes next steps towards integrated health and care

Leaders from hospital trusts, local authorities, care providers, voluntary organisations and BSW CCG have confidently taken steps towards more truly integrated health and care after applying to NHS England and Improvement (NHSEI) to be formally recognised as an Integrated Care System.

In an integrated care system, NHS organisations, in partnership with local councils and others, take collective responsibility for managing resources, delivering NHS standards, and improving the health of the population they serve.

Once the application has been approved, BSW will continue towards its vision of working together to empower people to lead their best lives.

It aims to achieve this through improving the quality and experience of care, improving the health and wellbeing of local people, reducing health and care inequalities, increasing staff wellbeing and delivering value for money.

Health and care leaders from across BSW say they have received positive feedback on their application and hope to hear back about the outcome of their submission in early December. In particular, NHSEI said they were impressed by BSW's plans for the future.

The next stage in the application process is to agree a draft BSW ICS Development Plan that will form the basis of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the BSW System and NHSEI. The MOU will act as an agreed development plan to help BSW Partnership continue to grow and develop as a thriving system.

Tracey Cox, Senior Responsible Officer for BSW Partnership and CEO of BSW CCG, thanked partners for the hard work they had put into the application and said the process had highlighted the significant amount of progress the BSW Partnership had made.

"We have come a long way and demonstrated during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic that we can achieve great things by working together.



BSW Partnership Senior Responsible Officer Tracey Cox: "We can achieve great things by working together."

"We're confident we can build on these solid foundations and are looking forward to the next chapter in our development as a truly integrated health and care system when we can continue to tackle big local issues such as addressing health inequalities, improving the health and wellbeing of local people and delivering value for money."

BSW Partnership: Our ambitions for local people:

- Help to prevent people from becoming ill
- Provide health care that meets the needs of local people when they need it
- Treat everyone as a whole person by taking all of their needs into account including physical, mental, emotional and social needs
- Provide support when and how people need it, not when it works best for us
- Support people at or close to their home whenever possible

Local authority plans show social care services are ready for winter

Local authorities across BSW have worked on ensuring the the national requirements of social care winter plans are met in all three authority areas.

Actions are also in place to show how adult social care services are prepared for the coming winter and are able to protect those who provide and receive care and minimise the spread of Covid-19.

The plans address four key areas and also set out learnings from the first wave of Covid-19.

Local authorities are working with public health teams and providers of social care to control the spread of infection in care homes and other care settings, they are also looking at how they will

encourage collaboration between health and social care providers, how they will support people who receive social care and what part they will play in supporting the social care system as a whole.

Sue Wald, Corporate Director for Adult Services, Health & Housing at Swindon Borough Council said social care is working jointly with NHS colleagues so winter plans are aligned

“The coming winter is expected to be particularly tough for everybody in health and care and our plan is designed to ensure the most vulnerable people in our community are able to receive the support they need in a timely and safe way.”

Hospitals work together across BSW to improve access to services

Hospitals in Bath, Swindon and Salisbury have been successfully working together to ensure access to beds and treatment across the area in the face of the rising number of Covid-19 patients.

Great Western Hospital in Swindon, the Royal United Hospital in Bath and Salisbury District Hospital work together as part of the BSW Partnership Acute Hospitals Alliance and have been actively looking at how they can make the most of their available beds for patients and support each other during busy periods.

They have also been working together on a number of projects designed to bring the hospitals closer together through initiatives such as using the same financial systems for payroll and purchasing, joint electronic patient information and the development of a single waiting list for some operations to ensure equity of access across BSW.



Ben Irvine, BSW Partnership Programme Director for the Acute Hospitals Alliance said the alliance will play a central role in the way acute services work together.

“Our Acute Hospitals Alliance will be crucial in terms of addressing capacity issues and pressure on beds this winter. It will also play a central role in reducing variations in hospital services across BSW and becoming more efficient through shared approaches in areas such as financial systems and patient records.”

Voluntary sector supporting vulnerable during second lockdown

Voluntary sector organisations across BSW are once again ready to provide vital support to vulnerable members of our local communities during the current lockdown.

Community groups achieved a huge amount during the first lockdown in terms of helping people with food deliveries, medicine, urgent housing, mental health and wellbeing and money matters.

Now those vital community groups are once again prepared to swing into action to help those in need.

In Bath and North East Somerset, voluntary group 3SG has been busy since March connecting volunteers across the area with thousands of people that need food and medication and the group is now preparing to step up their operation again.

Director James Carlin said: "It's been a full on year for us but we are delighted to have secured National Lottery funding to keep our Emergency Volunteer Response Service going until spring next year.

"We are fully integrated with the Community Wellbeing Hub which sees B&NES Council, Virgin Care and third sector organisations like Bath Mind, DHI, Citizens Advice and Age UK Banes working together in partnership. We are expecting plenty more calls over the coming weeks and months but hopefully we are now in a good position to meet that demand."

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.

Meanwhile in Wiltshire, over 20,000 people have been identified as being clinically vulnerable, and Wiltshire Council has said it is a priority for them to make sure those people receive support, partly through the Wiltshire Wellbeing Hub.



Wera Hobhouse MP with volunteers from the B&NES Compassionate Communities Hub

Need Help during lockdown?

If you're worried about how to manage during the upcoming lockdown, or know a friend or neighbour who might struggle - give one of the community hubs a call. They can offer all sorts of practical support to people who are vulnerable.

B&NES Community Wellbeing Hub:

0330 247 0050

bathnes.thehub@virginicare.co.uk

Swindon Borough Council:

01793 445500

customerservices@swindon.gov.uk

Our Wiltshire

033 003 4576

wellbeinghub@wiltshire.gov.uk

Remote monitoring of Covid-19 patients aims to catch complications before they get worse

People suffering from Covid-19 at risk of serious complications if their condition deteriorates will be able to monitor their oxygen levels and alert doctors to any changes thanks to a new remote system being trialled across BSW this month.

The remote home oximetry service, which has received support from a number of BSW partners including hospitals, Medvivo and the West of England Academic Health Science Network, means clinically vulnerable patients with Covid-19 isolating at home can measure their own oxygen levels and send data into local hospitals.



Some Covid-19 patients will be able to monitor their blood oxygen levels at home

If clinicians spot any early warning signs in terms of low blood oxygen levels – which can lead to complications and poor outcomes - the patient can then be admitted to hospital where they can receive treatment.

Dr Bryn Bird, a GP based in Bath and B&NES locality lead for BSW CCG said the new service would provide an important tool in addressing the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

"This new approach will allow clinicians to identify patients at home who are likely to deteriorate and quickly treat them."

"Early identification can save lives. This is a vital development and one we have had a lot of support for from across the BSW system."

Dr Bird also passed on his thanks to Dr Ian Williams, a GP in Wiltshire who has done a great deal to support this project.

Better access to health records to improve patient care in Bath and North East Somerset

Virgin Care has launched a new system that allows health and social care professionals to securely share records of 189,000 residents to provide better, proactive and more focussed community care across Bath and North East Somerset.

The Integrated Care Record (ICR) creates a single point of information for care professionals across the community allowing them to appropriately share records and ensure those who need it get access to treatment quickly as well as improving patient flow across the area and cutting waiting times.

At present, ICRs are available in Bath and North East Somerset, with a plan to extend them to Swindon and Wiltshire in the future.

ICRs share information between Virgin Care, General Practices, Bath and North East Somerset Council and Royal United Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

Dr Shanil Mantri, a GP and Chief Clinical Information Officer at Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire CCG said:

"The NHS, local authorities, GPs and social care providers are working together to improve health and care outcomes for local people. The introduction of Integrated Care records is a good example of this joint approach and will do a great deal to ensure everyone can access services quickly and efficiently without having to tell their story to different health and care professionals multiple times."

Think 111 First to help patients receive treatment in safe and timely way

Healthcare facilities across BSW have been working together to prepare for the launch of Think 111 First, a national programme that will encourage people to use NHS 111 to access a range of urgent care services including, for the first time, directly booking appointments at emergency departments.

From December, health and care facilities in BSW, including the Great Western Hospital in Swindon, the Royal United Hospital in Bath and Salisbury District Hospital, along with minor injury units and urgent treatment centres, will begin using the new system.

Think 111 First is already up and running around the country, including in Cornwall, Portsmouth and in six London emergency departments. Healthcare teams in these locations have spoken highly of the impact the new system has had in helping people to be treated in a safe and timely way.

Early trials across BSW have shown equally positive results, and the BSW

Partnership is using these learnings and those from the areas already using the system to refine processes ahead of the December launch.

Think 111 First aims to reduce the number of people who walk in, rather than arriving by ambulance, to emergency departments, as a way of reducing overcrowding and long wait times. At present, around 70 per cent of the people who use an emergency department arrive by walking in, and a significant proportion of these people could be safely treated elsewhere.

Tracey Cox said the introduction of Think NHS 111 First was a “positive step forward for our region” and added that anyone facing life threatening health emergencies should still call 999 or immediately travel to the nearest hospital emergency department.

“No person will be turned away from an emergency department if they arrive having not called NHS 111 first,” she said.

New service to offer support for Long Covid

BSW Partnership member organisations are working collaboratively to create dedicated clinics for people affected by a condition known as Long Covid.

The condition, which is thought to affect more than 60,000 people in the UK, can cause continuing fatigue, 'brain fog', breathlessness and pain.

Medical Directors from hospitals in BSW, GPs and representatives from community providers have discussed how to go about co-creating the key components of the service,

which will include a virtual assessment clinic, diagnostics and an onward referral pathway.

The pathway will also cover self-help options with input from the third sector and from those who have been affected by the condition.

A dedicated clinical working group is in place and working through the detailed pathway.

It is hoped that the service will start from December 1st.