

Minutes of the community hubs stakeholder engagement session, held at 5pm on Wednesday 27th January 2021 via Zoom

Present:

Karen Bonner (KBcn)	Chief Nurse, Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust (Chair)
Lesly Clifford (LC)	Associate Director of Communications and Engagement, Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust and chair of this meeting
Victoria Perkins (VP)	Interim Deputy Divisional Director, Integrated Elderly and Community Care Division, Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust
Alison Pirfo (AP)	Divisional Director, Elderly Care Medicine, Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust
KB	Thame League of Friends
NCW	Thame Town Council
BH	Representative, Rycote patient participation group
AB	Member of the public, representative of BOPAG Marlow and Marlow Bottom
AG	Marlow League of Friends
YH	Representative Unity patient participation group
MW	Representative, Unity patient participation group
JE	Member of the public
HM	Marlow Town Council
PL	Marlow League of Friends
Dee Irvin (DI)	Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Communications Manager, Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust

Apologies:

Alison Aylen	CATS and Community Hubs Manager, Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust
Sarah Taylor	Thame League of Friends and Representative, Rycote patient participation group

2. Minutes and update on actions

KB welcomed everyone to the meeting. The minutes from the previous meeting held on Tuesday 1st December 2021 were agreed no amends.

Action 37 – AP advised that following the meeting with M LoF an agreed list of improvements had been decided and these are being taken to the next SPACE

committee meeting to get approval. The next SPACE committee meeting is taking place on 2nd February 2021 and Jonathan Heighway (M LoF representative) will be attending the meeting to discuss how M LoF could help improve the facilities at Marlow Community Hospital for both patients and staff. AP to update group at March meeting.

PL asked that the building work was kept on the radar during these troubling times. The Marlow League of Friends are very keen to work with the Trust to improve the facilities for both staff and patients. KBcn asked if AP can carry on with these conversations outside of this meeting but bring any updates to the CHSG meetings.

3. COVID Trust Update

KBcn advised that the second wave is currently worse than the first with a increase in infections rates. As many of you will know, the council declared a major incident on 30th December 2020 amid fears that the rapid rise in the number of COVID-19 cases could overwhelm the county's health and social care services.

KBcn advised that the Trust is currently working at full capacity and therefore there is a need to stop some elective surgery. Full details of these changes can be found using the following link to the press release on the Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust website:

[Temporary changes to services to rise to challenges of latest COVID-19 surge \(buckshealthcare.nhs.uk\)](https://www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk/press-releases/2021/01/07/temporary-changes-to-services-to-rise-to-challenges-of-latest-covid-19-surge)

KBcn commented that the new strains were more difficult to manage within the community and hospital settings and were having a profound effect on infection rates amongst staff. The Trust therefore finds itself with more patients and less staff. Staff are currently exhausted having not recovered from the first wave and are finding fighting a second wave extremely challenging. The Trust is heavily focusing on the well being of staff and colleagues throughout the community. As a result of the some of the temporary changes, staff are being redeployed to areas and departments within the Trust that need additional support.

KBcn commented that on a positive note, a crisis brings out the best in people and the Trust is seeing some phenomenal upskilling of staff and innovative ways of working deployed across the Trust.

Clinical students are being deployed within the Trust along with the military.

The vaccine arrived at Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust in early December 2020. The Trust has 27,000 health and social care staff within Buckinghamshire to vaccinate within the vaccination centres operating from Stoke Mandeville Hospital and a new centre opening in Amersham Hospital next week. Staff include domiciliary staff, social care staff, Dentists, GP's, Health and Social care staff, Doctors, Nurses, Consultants etc. The Trust is currently vaccinating using the Pfizer vaccine.

Whilst being able to vaccinate so many staff groups and the obvious news that the vaccine is now starting to be rolled out to the most vulnerable groups within our community, KBcn advised that, as a community, we still need to be cautious and adhere to current government guidelines on social distancing and the wearing of face masks. The Trust has implemented some strict Infection Prevention Control (IPC) measures to ensure both patients and staff are protected during this pandemic.

KBcn advised that the Trust is currently making plans for the reopening of services with various developing recovery plans.

KB commented that attrition is going to take its toll on the NHS with staff possibly deciding to leave the Trust after this pandemic. How are the Trust coping and dealing with staff wellbeing and planning for the expected rise in attrition rates?

KBcn responded advising that the Trust is aware of the issues surrounding attrition and there is no denying that the effect this pandemic has had on staff across Trust has been extreme and over a long period of time. KBcn advised that the Trust already has recovery and renewal boards in place across the services to look at how the Trust will recovery following lockdown and take the positive changes to further develop them for the future.

KBcn advised that we are now working alongside military personnel and the Trust has developed an amazing health and wellbeing service for employees. This covers both physical and mental health services ranging from exercise classes through to occupational health services. Due to the publicity surrounding the NHS now, the NHS has seen an increase in people wanting to train to become nurses, doctors, healthcare assistants and work within many areas of the NHS. The pandemic will undoubtedly cause some healthcare professionals to question whether they want to stay within their chosen vocations but the love, support and pride surrounding the NHS at the moment, will generate additional resources. We have also have retired personnel wanting to come back into the NHS to help fight the pandemic. KBcn reminded the group that the NHS as whole came into the pandemic under resourced, so we are likely to be in the same situation coming out of it.

KB asked as a result of patients contracting COVID-19, many of them have long term respiratory conditions. Is the Trust building up respiratory services within the community?

KBcn advised that the Trust has developed a Long COVID service in partnership with Oxford University NHS Foundation Trust and the Buckinghamshire CCG, which will open at Stoke Mandeville Hospital early in January to support patients across the county who are suffering with Long COVID.

This is part of a national drive to help thousands of patients suffering with the long-term symptoms of coronavirus and enable them to access specialist help locally.

The clinic at Stoke Mandeville Hospital will be accepting referrals from GPs across Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, as well as following up with patients discharged from hospitals, to investigate any ongoing coronavirus symptoms which are affecting patients' lives, such as brain fog, anxiety, depression, breathlessness, fatigue and other debilitating symptoms.

The service will be run by a multi-disciplinary team. Patients will be offered a hospital appointment, as appropriate, with a respiratory consultant, psychologist and physiotherapist to offer both physical and psychological assessments and refer patients to the right treatment and rehabilitation services.

For more details, please see our press release - [Specialist clinic to treat Long COVID patients at Stoke Mandeville Hospital \(buckshealthcare.nhs.uk\)](https://www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk/news/specialist-clinic-to-treat-long-covid-patients-at-stoke-mandeville-hospital)

BH asked if patients will only get one shot of the vaccine and when would the second jab be given out to patients.

KBcn advised that Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust has been given the Pfizer vaccine and has not yet started booking second doses of the vaccine yet. Once we, as a Trust, are advised we can start offering the second doses to our staff, we will do so. The vaccination hubs have now been set up but as a nation and a local community, the primary focus must be on giving as many people as possible, their first dose of the vaccine,

NCW commented that he was very sceptical on having a consultant over the phone however, having received a virtual appointment, he felt that the process worked very well.

HM advised that within Marlow, patients of local GP's had been given the first vaccination dose along with an appointment for their second dose. KBcn advised that the national vaccination rollout was slightly different to the staff rollout hence why primary care patients have already been given their appointment slots for their second dose.

YH commented that she applauded Unity Health for the way the surgery had organised the roll out of the vaccination for patients.

NCW commented Both surgeries within Thame doing really well and keeping patients informed along the way too which is very important when much of the local population is in a higher age bracket.

4. Operational Update

AP advised that the number of CATS patient attendances remained consistent in November and December. The volume of referrals received increased in November and then dropped by 35% in December. There was therefore less demand for CATS appointments in early January.

Throughout December and continuing into January the national response to the escalating COVID situation has led to a number of initiatives and changes being implemented at speed across the community services as a whole.

This has been achieved by:

- Redeployment of staff into critical care areas to support and enable patient care and recovery wherever possible. This has led to the temporary suspension of some community-based services until the end of February, as an example we community therapy services.
- We have consolidated the CATS services which were operating out of Amersham, Thame and Marlow into Wycombe Hospital (MUDAS). We have also suspended new referrals into CATS but will continue to offer appointments at Wycombe hospital (MUDAS) for those already accepted and waiting for an appointment.
- Re-distribution of specialist staff, including therapists and consultants, to enable hospital inpatients to return home as quickly and safely as possible, with support, minimising delays wherever possible. In addition, some of these staff have been redeployed to provide additional care in or closer to patient's homes, avoiding the need then to attend hospital.

AP advised that with the recovery boards in place, hopefully CATS can return to their community sites in March 2021. This will obviously depend on the state of the national with the COVID-19 pandemic but also the impact of the second wave on our local community and services within the Trust.

KB wanted to Thank the community teams for keeping their services going through these challenging times.

5. AOB

KB asked if there was any update on additional services that might be brought into the community hubs (both Thame and Marlow)?

AP advised that a communication was sent out within the Trust asking services/dept if they would like to offer additional services within the either of the community hubs. AP advised this communication was sent last year and therefore these conversations need to be picked up when the Trust is in a better position following COVID.

KB also asked that Buckinghamshire Healthcare Trust need to reinforce communication with local GP practices to encourage use of the Community Hubs.

AP advised that, again, once COVID and the Trust is in a better place, herself and her team will pick up communication with local Community Hub GP practices to encourage referral and use of the services within the hubs.

NCW suggested that the Thame Diabetic retinopathy service could come into Thame Community hub.

MW commented that we need to keep an open mind, monitor the services and project manage new ones coming in. Thame League of Friends happy to help where they can.

YH commented that Diabetic retinopathy service in Thame would be brilliant.

PL commented that healthcare professionals are going to take a long time to recover. Please call and mobilise the people that want to offer help.

KB advised that there have been issues with 111 triage service where a patient was sent from Thame to Bicester Community Hospital for an x-ray but Bicester does not have an x-ray machine. Then sent to Wycombe hospital Urgent Treatment centre, but no available services so then sent to Stoke Mandeville Hospital all whilst in pain and with a suspected broken limb.

KBcn thanked KB for the feedback. As a new service, issues need to be reported and addressed where appropriate. Obviously, this should not have happened. KBcn to feedback to 111 service about this issue.

Next meeting – Tuesday 23rd March 2021 – This will be held as a Zoom meeting. Details below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84822688280?pwd=OGJJRIBYM0swd0Q2dHJJVDFpRU00dz09>