

Gloucestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Update – 10 October 2023

News:

- New respiratory and frailty virtual wards for winter.
- New community neurology team to support return to home earlier.
- Working with South West Ambulance Service on rapid response to home direct pathway to save visits to hospital – Glos is the highest performing in South West.
- Industrial action and hot September weather has caused challenges on elective delivery dates.

Winter flu/Covid modelling:

- Southern hemisphere hasn't had a remarkable flu season so not too worried here.
- Small wave of COVID compared to last year but we still don't have a seasonal pattern for COVID to work from.
- ICU bed use remains low, people are being admitted to hospital with COVID rather than because of it.
- New variant hasn't turned out to be worse than seen previously and high infection rates now are good to boost immunity and decrease transmission into more vulnerable winter period.
- Vaccination offer remains for vulnerable and over 65s. This decision is based on the time spent on the vaccination programme versus the benefit to reducing the rate in the community.
- National policy is not to recommend testing, need to bring COVID in line with other respiratory diseases. Government currently deem level of severity to be manageable so not recommending testing.

Other:

- 96.8% of cancer referrals seen within 2 weeks.
- Adult and Child Mental Health still too many out of area placements.
- Still 672 young people on CAMHS waiting list, although this is an 18% decrease on last year 40% of these have been waiting over one year. There is a real term decrease in core staff as some of the staff team have been redeployed to community settings.
- HOSC has agreed to set up a working group to look into children and young people's mental health care in the county.
- Primary care appointments were reorganised last year so that more appointments were available for same day urgent appointments. This does have a knock on impact on availability of routine appointments and HOSC asked if waiting times varied across county. Data will be subsequently provided to show waiting times.
- An issue with appointment letters arriving late so now if appointments are being issued within two weeks then NHS staff will also email/phone to confirm. Funding has just been awarded to create a patient portal to link with the NHS app so patients will be able to see all appointments in the app.
- Balance/frailty prevention has been piloted in Tewkesbury but in 23/24 will roll out to all areas. 'We can move' charity have been commissioned to get 30000 more people active & information will be provided to Councillors at HOSC for them to share in their communities.