

Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting Notes - 28 November 2023

GP Services:

- There were 17k more GP appointments in Sept 23 compared with Sep 19. That's a 12% increase. Reasons for this are unknown although could be due to more availability of online appointments in 2023 than in 2019? (These account for 11.5k of the extra 17k)
- Wait times for appointments were not provided by district so staff were asked again to provide these. Compared to national rates wait times for appointments within 2 weeks are slightly under whilst over 2 weeks are higher reflecting Gloucestershire's policy to prioritise urgent & same day appointments over routine in allocations.
- Patient satisfaction once seen is higher than national rates
- Out of hours procurement underway
- Decrease in number of GP partners (-19%) but increase in salaried workers (+37.7%) – overall decrease in no. FTE GPs is -2.6% from 2019. Lower than SW and national rates (-4.1% & -4.2% respectively)

Community Dental Services:

- Currently 62 providers of NHS Community Dental Care
- Adult dental access rate is lower than SW average (29% compared with 35.5%)
- Planning a Primary Care Dental Centre of Excellence to increase access and investing in local apprenticeship and T level offers with local providers.

Community Pharmacy Services:

- In Nov 22 Vacancy rate was 20%, Stats for Nov 23 due in 3-6 months. Lower than average no. of pharmacies per 10,000 GP patients (2.5 compared with 2.9 England average)
- Councillors raised the issue of shortages and could this be linked with planning policy?

Workforce

- Vacancy rate remains higher than England (9.9% compared with 8.9%). This equates to 947 posts for Gloucestershire NHS Trusts and is up 0.5% since 2021/22
- The Local plan aims to:
 - Become not reliant on overseas staff (currently 50% of medical recruits nationally came from overseas. NHS longterm workforce plan is to reduce this to 10%)
 - Prioritise the importance of staff wellbeing
 - Encourage local talent – promotion of NHS careers in local secondary schools (I asked for a breakdown of which schools had been chosen – there are 19 & details will be sent through)
- Questions were asked about scope for increasing pay to help attract/retain staff & the response was that pay is set nationally and not within local control
- Questions were also asked about informing planning policy re keyworker housing due to affordability in Gloucestershire. Councillors to take back to local councils.

Performance

- Ambulance wait times are up again (Oct Cat 2 went from 46.7 minutes in Sep to 70.9 minutes). Cat 1 figures for Sep not provided so asked if this can be standard in reporting going forward to show comparisons. Response was that they are working to manage more in the community to reduce wait times for ambulances and a report on the impact of this bit of work is due in a few months and will come to HOSC.
- Doing well on Out of Area placements, purchased extra beds to manage the pressure and currently under target (YTD total is 241 days at end of Q2 and end of year target is 800)

Questions:

- Out of Area placements for mental health (see above)
- Children's cancer psychology support – The Trust's Psychology Department has a specialist Paediatric team (not cancer specific) but they do also work with the Teenage Cancer Trust and Clic Sargeant. I was told that many young people are treated at Bristol Royal Infirmary where the paediatric psychology service is highly regarded. They were unable to answer the question about how Gloucestershire compares nationally in terms of provision.