

## **Report to 30 October 2023 Meeting of CBC Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

### **Summary of October 2023 Meeting of GCC Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

A full recording of this meeting is available in the “Online meetings” section of the GCC website. The public information pack which includes all presentations is also available on this website. The minutes are not yet available, so this paper is based solely on notes I took at the time.

#### **1. Scrutiny Items –**

##### **1.1 NHS Gloucestershire Winter Sustainability Plan 2023-24 & Update on Urgent and Emergency Care Transformation Programme**

Pages 23 to 39 of the agenda pack give details of how each member of the integrated care system (ICS) plans to improve capacity and flow to deal with the upsurge in patients likely to be experienced in the coming months. The lack of a real seasonal pattern that Covid is now exhibiting along with the current low occupancy of ITU suggesting the new variant is not having too bad an impact should make winter 2023/24 less demanding on the healthcare system than many recent ones.

Page 37 onwards describes the work being carried out with Newton Europe to bring about improvements in the urgent and emergency care pathways. Five areas have been identified with plans in place to improve each:

1. Prevention
2. Community urgent response
3. Hospital flow and decision making with a key focus on additional support for ward rounds and MDTs.
4. Intermediate care, particularly reablement.
5. Access to packages of care

#### **2. Information Items – see presentations for full details:**

##### **2.1 Gloucestershire Integrated Care System (ICS) Performance Report**

- No patients waiting for CT & MRI at GHNHST more than 6 weeks ranking it in first place nationally but issues still with ECGs and colonoscopies.
- Patients waiting for planned care have dropped slightly since the last report but still very high at 80,522.
- ED & MIU performance against the 4-hour target has dropped to 72.7% in August but remained slightly better than the national average and ambulance response times have maintained recent improvements with Cat 1 response at 9.5 mins and Cat 2 at 29.8 mins
- Demand for primary care services remains very high with 352,531 appointments carried out in July meaning that year to date there have been 93,000 more appointments than planned.
- Waits for mental health services for children and young people remain high across all providers.

- More positively the 2 week wait and faster diagnostic cancer waiting times targets are now being met but the 62-day referral to treatment target has been missed though performance is in line with most acute trusts.

## 2.2 NHS Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board (ICB) Update – this report is now divided into 3 sections

- Section 1 an update on national and local commissioning issues
- Section 2 an update on primary care issues from the commissioner perspective
- Section 3 an update from the 3 provider Trusts; Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust (GHC), Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (GHT) and South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SWAST)
- Of note, given the recent motion at Council about birthing services at CGH, here is a direct quote from the GHNHST report:

“Despite sustained efforts by the Recruitment and Retention team midwifery vacancies remain of concern. The vacancy rate remains consistently high at 14.41%. The midwifery service remains under establishment (under-staffed) at 36.85 WTE in Band 5, 6 and 7 (based on July 2023 data). More broadly, turnover combined with absence and sickness means that there was a shortage of 63.57 whole time equivalents (WTE) or full-time staff (based on July 2023 data). Positively, 4.1 WTE Band 5 Registered Nurses commenced in July 2023. At the time of writing this report 14 new starters have been lined up to join in September with a further 9 WTE starting between October and January 2024.”

Finally, in light of the motion concerning the closure of the Aveta Birthing Unit at CGH at the July full Council meeting which requested referral of our concerns regarding its closure to HOSC, I attach below for information, a minute of the July HOSC meeting (agreed at this, the October meeting) which refers to the scrutiny of this issue at the May and July HOSC meetings and to the update due in November.

### “GLOUCESTERSHIRE HOSPITALS TRUST MATERNITY (TEMPORARY CHANGES) UPDATE

5.1 The committee received an update on the delivery of maternity services at Cheltenham General Hospital and Stroud Maternity Unit, including the actions taken to progress midwifery recruitment and retention.

5.2 Members recalled that at the committee meeting in May 2023, the committee had received information on Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust’s maternity service staffing position and the actions associated with consideration of alternative staffing models to support the opening of the birth centre in Cheltenham and post-natal beds in Stroud.

5.3 Dr Simon Pirie, (Chief of Service: Women & Children) and Lisa Stephens, (Director of Midwifery), for NHS Gloucs joined the meeting via remote access to respond to questions. For further information an update is also due to be received at the November HOSC meeting.”

I will of course feedback the November update as soon as I have it.

**Adrian Bamford**