



Newsletter

Autumn 2019

www.berkshirewesticp.org

Have your say on NHS plans for our area

A wide spread engagement process on the future arrangements for NHS commissioning in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West was launched this week.

It will last until 1 December and there are full details on the website www.berkshirewestccg.nhs.uk or on via this link: www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/L2VJ2M7. Fact sheets giving details of the proposals are also going to be sent to all surgeries in Berkshire West so patients can get involved.

The website has the document which outlines proposals for a single Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) covering Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB).

Dr Abid Irfan, Chair of Berkshire West CCG said: "Over the past year, we have been exploring how we can work more effectively and efficiently across the BOB healthcare system to achieve our shared ambition.

"We all have a responsibility to make sure valuable resources are used wisely and in the best way to support people in living longer, happier, healthier and more independently into their old age. We want to make sure people have access to quality healthcare whilst also cutting the health inequalities that exist today.

"Please be assured that, whatever commissioning arrangements are put in place in the future, our priority continues to be making sure local needs are addressed, that we provide people with access to quality healthcare and that we reduce the health inequalities that exist today," said Dr Irfan.

Update on the ICS Five Year Plan

The Integrated Care System (ICS) has just published two updates on the development of its five year plan. They outline the range of organisations involved in BOB ICS, how they work together locally and at scale and how they are developing their priorities and plans to meet the health and care needs of their communities. There's more information on www.bobstp.org.uk.

In further BOB ICS developments, Sam Burrows, Deputy Chief Officer at Berkshire West CCG, has been seconded to the role of BOB ICS Programme Director until June 2020.

Sam's role has been taken on by Sarah Seaholme who joins the CCG from NHS England where she led the 'Specialty Based Transformation' programme in the National Elective Care Transformation Team.



This covered 14 high volume specialities acting as a catalyst for improving quality and patient experience, promoting integrated patient care and driving transformational change.

She also has wide experience of health and social care regulation, covering acute, mental health, community, independent and social care providers.

Stay well this winter

A wide ranging campaign to promote flu jabs and encourage people to look after themselves over winter has been launched by local health chiefs.

People are being urged to prepare for winter by getting prescriptions sorted before the festive holiday, stocking up on cold and flu remedies and over the counter medicines and seeking help from a pharmacist as soon as they feel unwell and before it gets serious.



Health chiefs are also advising people to find out where the most appropriate point of healthcare is in case they become unwell. This could be the pharmacist, a local Minor Injuries Unit (MIU) or Walk-in Centre (WiC). It may be quicker visiting one of these options rather than heading to the hospital's Emergency Department (ED).

Free flu jabs are now being given to all the at-risk groups of people* and parents with children in school year 6 are being reminded their youngsters now qualify for the vaccination.

The most common symptoms of flu are fever, chills, headache, aches and pains in the joints and muscles, and extreme tiredness. Healthy people usually recover within a week, but for others it can lead to hospitalisation, permanent disability or even death.

Some people are more susceptible to the effects of flu and they face an increased risk of developing more serious illnesses like bronchitis and pneumonia.

Dr Abid Irfan, Chair of Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) said: "Even if patients were vaccinated last year, they should go for a jab again this year because there are different strains of flu each winter. Also, protection from the vaccine may only last about six months.

"It's important too that people realise there's no risk of them getting flu by having the vaccination. The jab is there to protect them from what can be a very nasty illness," Dr Irfan added.

*Look out for social media messages telling you how to prepare for winter and keep well. There's also more information on www.berkshirewestccg.nhs.uk and www.berkshirewesticp.nhs.uk.

A flu patient's winter warning

Reading mum Marisa Bueno contracted flu last Christmas and not only did it ruin her family's festivities, it floored her for weeks afterwards.

Her 12-year-old son got it first during a trip to see family in Spain. And, because it is so contagious, it quickly spread to Marisa, her brother and 75 year old mother.

They suffered fever up to 40C, joint and back pain and strong persistent coughs.



“At the peak of it we were unable to leave bed or have any solid food, only fluids. Even staying in bed was not particularly comfortable as we had both shivering and sweating and didn't sleep well,” said Marisa, a Commercial Manager who lives in Caversham.

These serious symptoms dragged on for eight days and were followed by post flu symptoms of extreme tiredness which lasted for another three weeks, during which Marisa contracted a chest infection linked to the flu.

“I was 42 at the time, fit and well with a good healthy lifestyle and had no reason to believe I was particularly prone to flu and I was surprised how both my brother (40) and I, went down really quickly with the illness and took such a long time to recover.

“The illness clearly doesn't discriminate by age. Everyone in my family from the ages of 12 to 76 was affected. I can imagine how hard this could impact someone who had pre-existing health conditions or compromised immune systems,” said Marisa.

“By experiencing first-hand what the virus can do to young and fit individuals, I can see how entire populations were decimated by it before vaccinations and antibiotics became widely available. It is important not to think that the illness is now less lethal than it was in the past.

“After we had overcome our flu we heard from one of our neighbours, that her mum, also in her 70s had passed away from complications brought up by the virus. It can still happen in this day which is why I think it is so important people take a flu jab,” she said.

“I also feel the implications of flu can go beyond the loss of physical health. At some point, during my recovery, I felt quite isolated at home. Because it is so easily spread, I was advised to keep away from family, friends or neighbours. I can see how easy it could be for the elderly, those with other illnesses or those without families, to slide into feelings of isolation and depression which can obviously take much longer to deal with,” said Marisa.

Video appointments to make life easier for patients – and medics

A special video conferencing system which delivers virtual appointments to patients has been trialled at the Royal Berkshire Hospital as part of a nationwide pilot.

The system, called 'Attend Anywhere', links healthcare providers with patients and is aimed at saving people having to make trips to hospital for appointments that can just as easily be done on line.

During the trial, renal consultant Emma Vaux linked via video conference to GP Heike Veldtman at Thatcham Medical Centre. Emma said: "I love the face-to-face nature of the conversation... it feels very different to usual email or telephone communications. I think our relationships will improve as a result and that can only be good for patients. It will feel very different when we start to do the same with patients - many will be very tech savvy, but there will also be those who are not and we have to be careful a screen does not get in the way."

RBH Patient leader John Stannard, said: "For me it meets our objectives - flexibility for patients and clinicians, better use of everyone's time, freeing up facilities including parking, and it's professional, secure and easy to use."

Work is now being done to develop video appointments between clinicians and certain patients who will be able to enter a virtual waiting area via a button on the website and wait in their own private video room until an authorised provider is ready to join them. Clinicians will be notified when a patient arrives, and then join the patient's video room from their computer, tablet, or mobile device.



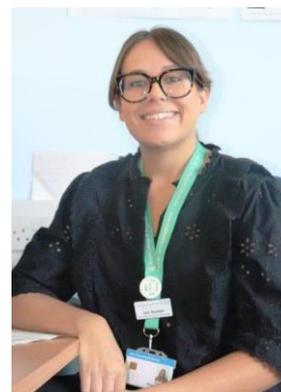
Emma (right) sits at the RBH for a video link to Heike at Thatcham Medical Centre.

Physician Associates – The new faces in healthcare

Meet Sam Bautista, one of 20 Physician Associates (PAs) now working around Reading.

PAs are part of a new breed of healthcare professionals - highly medically trained and able to diagnose and treat a wide range of clinical conditions. They will play a key role in easing pressure on doctors and providing patients, especially those with long term conditions, the continuity of care they need.

They are part of the multi skilled healthcare teams now being established within our Primary Care Networks (PCNs) - the new clusters of neighbouring GP surgeries who are now working together to provide more health and wellbeing care closer to people's homes.



Reading based Sam splits her time between the University Health Centre and the Royal Berkshire Hospital's Neurology department where she runs a number of clinics.

"At the Centre I see any patients who walk through the door in the same way that the GPs do. I work under the supervision of a doctor, but semi-autonomously," said Sam.

"My work allows the team to optimise and increase the number of appointments available for patients and my being there means GPs can focus much more on the urgent and complex patients."

"PAs can help broaden the capacity of the GP role and skill mix within the practice team to help address the needs of patients in response to the growing and ageing population," she added.

At the RBH Sam's clinics cover cervical dystonia, hemi-facial spasms, headaches and nerve blocks.

PAs, after earning a biosciences degree, have to complete a two year intensive training programme which includes a minimum 1,600 hours of clinical placements, extensive medical teaching, and a long list of clinical competencies. The generalised nature of their work complements that of practice nurses who traditionally specialise in certain areas of healthcare like diabetes.

Sam, who's from Gibraltar, moved to the UK to study and complete a degree in Biomedical Sciences. "After a year long placement in the research industry I realised I had a greater passion in wanting to work much more closely with patients and have more input in their medical care," she said.

"The reaction of patients and staff has been nothing but positive since I began working. Most have been very open with the way the NHS is changing concerning optimising how patient care is delivered. They realise patient quality and safety is not disrupted and standards remain the same, if not better," she added.

By 2020, the Department of Health and Health Education England (HEE) – the organisation responsible for NHS workforce training – want to see a total of 1,000 Physician Associates recruited to primary care roles.

Get the App to get more out of your NHS

The NHS App has been developed by the NHS to help people in England get more information about their health and care - and more control of how they use NHS services.

Available to download on all IOS and Android devices, it allows you to book appointments at your GP surgery, manage repeat prescriptions, view your GP medical records, set organ donation preferences and much more. New functions and services will also be added in the coming months.

Find out more here: www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/the-nhs-app

News in brief

Top marks for University Practice

Reading's University Medical Group has scooped two top awards in the last couple of months. It's been assessed - again - as an 'Outstanding' practice by the Care Quality Commission and has also been voted best practice in Reading for patient satisfaction in a major survey conducted by the NHS. [Find out more here.](#)

Honours for two local medics

Consultant Physician [Dr Ian Gallen](#) and [GP Dr Debbie Milligan](#), have both received Honours for their services to public health. Endocrinologist, Dr Gallen was awarded a CBE and Dr Milligan, a GP at Swallowfield Medical Practice, was appointed an OBE.

Top honour for paramedic

RBH Paramedic Spencer Winch has become one of the first ever paramedic independent prescribers in the UK. It means he can offer patients a 'one stop' service – he doesn't have to leave them during assessments to ask a doctor to sort prescriptions.

Medal wins at Transplant Games

The Berkshire Royals transplant team scooped four medals at this year's World Transplant Games in Newcastle. Mike Grundy got a gold and bronze in tennis, Mark Powell picked up a bronze in darts and Mike Marshall won a bronze in Petanque (French Bowls).

