

# NHS Devon Update

**31 March 2023**

## Junior Doctor Industrial Action

The British Medical Association and HCSA have announced junior doctors strikes running from 06:59 on Tuesday 11 April until 06:59 on Saturday 15 April. This is four days of strikes coming immediately after a four day bank holiday weekend. The days leading into and immediately after bank holiday weekends are already challenging for the NHS with high levels of staff are on annual leave due to school Easter holidays.

This industrial action is set to be the biggest and most disruptive strike in NHS history. Junior doctors make up around half of all doctors in the NHS. They are qualified doctors who have anywhere up to eight years' experience working as a hospital doctor, depending on their specialty, or up to three years in general practice. So, these are people who make a material contribution to patient safety on a day to day basis.

During the strike, we will prioritise resources to protect emergency treatment, critical care, maternity, neonatal care and trauma and that will be our absolute priority. We would not want colleagues to underestimate the impact this industrial action will potentially have on our patients.

The NHS will contact patients if their hospital appointment needs to be rescheduled due to strike action. GP practices will continue to be open during the junior doctors strike. Patients should continue to attend your GP and dental appointments, unless they are contacted and told otherwise.

## Pharmaceutical, ophthalmic and dental services

NHS Devon took on responsibility for commissioning primary pharmaceutical, ophthalmic and dental services from 1 April. We have been working with NHS England to manage this transition and a regional hub has been established which is made up of most of the people previously engaged in commissioning these services. There has been no additional funding made available for this extra commissioning responsibility.

## Five Year Joint Forward Plan

Work continues to set out NHS Devon's response to the Integrated Care Strategy in the Five-Year Joint Forward Plan (JFP). This plan will set out how the health elements of the strategy will be met between 2023 and 2028. We have been seeking input on our plan from partners across the county. The final plan will be published at the end of June, following sign off by the Integrated Care Board and One Devon Board.

## Surgical hub wins recognition for meeting top clinical and operational standards

A hospital site in Devon that is helping to reduce planned care waiting lists has received recognition for meeting top clinical and operational standards.

The South West Ambulatory Orthopaedic Centre (SWAOC) at the Nightingale Hospital in Exeter is one of eight to be awarded accreditation as part of a pilot scheme.

The scheme, run by NHS England's Getting It Right First Time (GIRFT) programme in collaboration with the Royal College of Surgeons of England, assesses hubs against a framework of standards to help hubs deliver faster access to some of the most common surgical procedures such as cataract surgeries and hip replacements.

Surgical hubs, which are separated from emergency services, are part of plans nationally to increase capacity for elective care with more dedicated operating theatres and beds. They bring together the skills and expertise of staff under one roof helping to deliver shorter waits for surgery.

## Vaccinations

The programme for both Flu and Covid vaccinations have been delivered for this season.

72.3% (22 March) of the Devon population aged 12+ have had their COVID vaccination (England 59.3%), significantly higher than the England average, making the South West the top performing region.

Flu vaccination levels in Devon are higher than the 2021 winter campaign. 76.5% of eligible patients have been vaccinated, 28,000 more than 2021.

## Urgent and Emergency Care Performance

Winter continues to be a challenging period; we are seeing some improvements in performance but the overall effectiveness of our winter plans are still being reviewed at the moment.

Looking forward, NHS England published the joint NHS and DHSC *Delivery plan for recovering urgent and emergency care services* on the 30 January 2023. The key deliverables for the next two years will focus on improving patient flow to improve urgent and emergency care performance. This will be measured through a 30-minute mean response time for Category 2 ambulance and 76% performance in A&E wait times.

## No Criteria to Reside (NCTR)

We have seen an improvement in NCTR performance. (NCTR is beds occupied by patients who are medically ready to go home or to other care settings, such as social care placements.) This can be attributed to a number of factors that have allowed more capacity to open up in our hospitals, which in turn has supported discharges. These include:

- Opening and fully utilising discharge lounges in hospitals
- De-escalating lower demand bed areas which has allowed staff to be refocussed on discharge
- Reduction of infection outbreaks within the community
- Using the additional discharge funding to purchase beds, packages of care and wraparound support services.

To further reduce the NCTR position we focussed on those patients who need little or no support when they leave hospital. All acute hospitals are improving in this area and trialling various initiatives including:

- *Home for Lunch* initiative - using virtual board rounds and identifying patients the day before.
- Maintaining patient flow at the weekends - by recruiting discharge co-ordinators and ward clerks to work seven days a week.

## £200m National Hospital Discharge fund

### What we received

NHS Devon was allocated a maximum capital budget of £4.237 million as part of the overall national £200m discharge fund. We have worked with NHS and care providers to develop a series of targeted schemes across all localities to invest as much of the available funding by the deadline of 31 March 2023 within the parameters that were available.

### How it has been invested

The fund has enabled us to deliver schemes including:

- Block purchasing step down beds within a care home setting
- Purchasing 1:1 packages of care to support those with complex Dementia to be discharged from hospital into a care home
- Purchasing packages of care to support people to discharged home from hospital
- Providing medical cover to support the block purchasing of care home beds

- Additional Occupational Therapists to reduce length of stay within step down care home beds to enable the person to return home
- Additional agency social workers to support assessments and reduce length of stay within a mental health inpatient bed
- Additional discharge coordinators to support more discharges at weekends
- Peer support workers to help transition patients to a community setting following a MH inpatient stay

## Outcomes

The schemes delivered using the discharge funding have been successful and have contributed to a reduction in the proportion of patients who are medically fit to leave hospital but unable to (often referred to as No Criteria To Reside):

[Analysis by HSJ](#), published on 13 February, cited Devon as having the tenth largest reduction in the number of delayed discharges since the fund was announced.

## Finance Update

### Devon Integrated Care System (ICS) Financial Position as of January 2023

On 20 June 2022, Devon ICS submitted a deficit plan of £18.2m, although there is a requirement that the system achieves a breakeven outturn by year end and an expectation that £138.9m of efficiency savings are needed to meet that plan.

As at month 10 the Devon ICS is reporting a year to date £37.0m deficit against a planned deficit of £19.5m –£17.6m more than planned for this point in the financial year.

The forecast for the end of the 2022/23 financial year is a deficit of £49.2m, which is £31.0m more than the planned deficit of £18.2m.

### NHS Devon Integrated Care Board (ICB) Financial Position as of January 2023

As at month 10 the NHS Devon ICB is reporting a year-to-date deficit surplus of £0.1m and an end of year surplus of £0.1m against a breakeven plan. This is subject to the ICB receiving the expected allocations from NHSE for the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme (ARRS) and the discharge fund costs.

### Looking Ahead to 2023/24

Waiting lists and finances continue to present huge challenges for NHS Devon.

The secretary of state has written to all ICBs asking that they must make a 30% real terms reduction in their running costs budgets by 2025/26, with at least 20% to be delivered in 2024/25. Running cost allowances for ICBs have already been held flat in cash terms in 2023/24 (i.e. no inflationary uplift). Our current allowance is £22.6 million in 2023/24 reducing to £17.0 million in 2025/26.

Next year significant savings will be needed to deliver a financially sustainable system wide plan. This is a long process that will require support from all partners in the county.

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