

# Update from NHS Devon

## January 2024

### Covid and Flu Vaccination Programme

The South West has again achieved the highest uptake for covid and flu vaccinations in the country. The Devon system has provided over 737,000 covid and flu vaccinations this autumn, including vaccinating over 92% of care home residents. It is a fantastic collaborative achievement between all our Primary Care Network, community pharmacy, hospital, vaccination centre, outreach and NHS Devon teams who work hard to maximise protection for vulnerable people against winter viruses.

We currently have uptake levels across Devon of 62% for Covid and 73% for flu and are asking primary care colleagues to continue to contact patients to invite them in to be vaccinated or to advise them where they can get their vaccinations. Although the National Booking Service is now closed, people can still access covid vaccinations through their GP, community pharmacy or vaccination centre until 31 January, with primary care being able to offer flu vaccinations until 31 March. For any queries people can contact the Vaccination Support Team at [d-icb.devonvaccinationsupport@nhs.net](mailto:d-icb.devonvaccinationsupport@nhs.net)

### Financial update

The forecast financial out-turn for our NHS system as a whole in Devon, after delivering a very challenging savings plan of £212 million, is a planned deficit of £42.3 million in 2023/24. We are working extremely hard to deliver the plan but some unexpected issues, including industrial action, are making this challenging.

As a system, we remain in the lowest segment (segment 4) of the NHS Oversight Framework. This means we get 'intensive' support from NHS England – which includes additional reporting requirements and financial controls.

We are in this position due to a range of challenges including service performance (such as urgent and elective care), people, leadership, finance and strategy.

NHS England has made it clear to us that we need to increase our focus on achieving the criteria for moving out of NOF4. In the short-term, we will be re-focusing and reprioritising our work, our efforts and some of our resources and staff. Doing so will give us more control over our future – helping us to provide safe, timely

and affordable care, as well as focusing on the long-term priorities that we are all keen to work on.

We have already shown we can do it – for example, we have made excellent progress in reducing the numbers of people waiting more than two-years for care, and each month.

### **Elective care**

The finalised October position shows that the Devon Integrated Care System (ICS) has not met the submitted 104 and 78 week wait trajectories but has met its trajectory for 65 week waits. However, we are close to clearing our 104 week waiting list with an expected completion date of the end of January.

Ongoing issues with activity lost as a result of industrial action has been a factor that has impacted on recovery of activity and performance levels detailed within the operating plan.

### **Industrial action**

We have now seen over a year of industrial action across the NHS and staff continue to work hard to provide patients with the best possible care under the circumstances. Industrial action has impacted over a million hospital appointments across the NHS in England, as of the 15 December 2023.

According to [data published by NHS England](#), in Devon, over 2,500 NHS appointments, including inpatients, outpatients and mental health, were cancelled as a result of industrial action in October 2023.

The latest junior doctor strike action took place from 7am on Wednesday 20 December until 7am on Saturday 23 December. At the time of writing further strikes by junior doctors are expected to take place from 7am on Wednesday 3 January until 7am on Tuesday 9 January.

### **Pharmacy closures**

There are a number of Boots Pharmacy closures currently being processed across the UK, including in the south west.

The NHS South West Collaborative Commissioning Hub (SW CCHub), in partnership with NHS Devon, is undertaking a local engagement process to ensure a clear understanding of any concerns being raised by local community pharmacy providers, GP practices, Healthwatch and Local Authority Public Health teams. The Health and Wellbeing Board will be included as part of this engagement process. These concerns inform how we support patients and providers leading up to and after the closure.

Where previous market exits have taken place, we have seen neighbour pharmacies take a variety of different steps to be able to support patients who are seeking an alternative pharmacy. In addition, nearby pharmacies who are likely to be impacted

by a closure, are contacted to discuss the potential increase in activity, allowing them to share any concerns they may have. Liaison with local GP practices is also undertaken to ensure they are supported with any patient queries, and the SW CCHub work with the outgoing provider to ensure a safe closedown process is in place.

### **NHS Devon Chief Executive Officer**

NHS Devon has appointed Steve Moore as its new Chief Executive Officer following a competitive, national recruitment process. Steve will join NHS Devon on 12 February 2024.

Having worked for the NHS for most of the last 30 years, Steve has extensive expertise and knowledge at a senior level, including most recently as the Chief Executive of Hywel Dda University Health Board in Wales, a role he has held since January 2015.

Steve knows Devon and the wider South West well, as has led NHS organisations in Devon, Plymouth, Torbay and Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. Bill Shields will remain as interim CEO until Steve takes up the post.

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