

HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR LINCOLNSHIRE
MEETING - SEPTEMBER 13 2023

New Diagnostic Centres - There are to be two in Lincolnshire, one at Lincoln and a second at Skegness. This represents an investment of £38m. Grantham already has one such facility which opened in April last year and has already carried out 59,000 tests.

Two Childrens' Wards at Lincoln - Recently inspected by the CQC and the good rating continues, however it was noted there was no specialist equipment to support young people meet their individual needs.

Caskgate Surgery in Gainsborough - The CQC inspection deemed the practice inadequate and placed it in special measures. It will be fully inspected again in six months time.

Seasonal Vaccination for Covid and Flu - Started on September 11. Covid boosters to be targeted at Care Home elderly adults, residents 65 and over; babies of six months to adults of 64 who are deemed at risk; front line health and social care workers; people aged 12 to 64 who are household contacts of people with immunosuppression. Flu jabs go to those aged 65 and over; six months to 65 who are at risk; pregnant women; children aged 2 or 3 on August 31 and primary school aged children up to Year 6; residents of long term care homes, carers or anyone in receipt of carers allowance; close contacts of immune compromised; front line health and social care workers.

Health watch Lincolnshire Forward Vision Event - 31.10.23 from 10am to 3pm at Bishop Grosseteste University with a high level panel discussing challenges and opportunities. Anyone interested can register via their website.

GP Patient Survey 2023 - In Lincolnshire 24956 questionnaires distributed with 9872 replies. 71 percent rated Lincolnshire GPs as good or fairly good with 14 percent responding poor to fairly poor. These figures in line with national averages. In the county 84 percent found receptionists helpful with 57 percent replying they found experience of making an appointment was good - again higher than the national average.

Cancer Care and Living with Cancer - There has been a change in the timetable standards, which are now 28 Days Faster Diagnosis Standard for urgent referrals/ 32 Day Standard ie a maximum of one month from decision to earliest clinically appropriate date to begin treatment/ 62 Day Standard from receipt of urgent GP referral for urgent suspected cancer or breast symptomatic referral or urgent screening referral or consultant upgrade to First Definitive Treatment of Cancer.

Covid 19 took its toll on cancer performance within Lincolnshire but the endoscopy unit here was one of the fastest in the country to recover. Lincolnshire is recognised by Sir Mike Richards as quite unique in its population demographics and its challenges in the discussions on speed of recover. Fear of Covid 19 deterred many from presenting for screening or having symptoms, which was one of the main challenges primary care providers faced. Treatment delays were affected by the pandemic and there was also significant psychological and emotional impact causing stress and anxiety among cancer patients and their families. It even led to some becoming disengaged with the system. These issues continue to be assessed.

Recovery focus is a long term plan objective and this will enable people to survive their diagnosis for at least five years after diagnosis. There is a 62 day backlog in Lincolnshire and this is being addressed as a priority. Backlogs in the North Lincolnshire and Goole Trust are lower, mainly because their patient number is substantially less than within Lincolnshire.

Innovative strategies are being employed to address backlogs by using such vehicles as virtual consultations allowing healthcare professionals to provide essential care remotely.

Monitoring the situation is reviewed weekly through the Integrated Care Board Executive, with the Cancer Board reporting monthly from ULHT and quarterly from Northern Lincolnshire and Goole. All boards report improvements with pathway times showing good reductions.

Aging population will continue to mean there will be increased demand as well as the prevalence of chronic diseases and advances in medical technology. Such advances however pose a complex task for healthcare providers. Lincolnshire has significant health inequalities compared with neighbouring counties and addressing these disparities in health outcomes is a complex and multifaceted challenge. In Lincolnshire it is recognised the NHS must adapt to provide culturally sensitive care and meet the specific needs of different population groups, including those with language barriers or specific health conditions.

Improvements are continuing but there is more to be done and the quality of healthcare provided will only go forward "by working together" and the "passionate teams involved in cancer care" in the county.

Lincolnshire Living with Cancer Programme is now up and running with financial support from MacMillan, who have also awarded the programme an Excellence Award in the integration category. The scheme is designed to support people where and how they choose, placing the patient at the centre of everything. The scheme supports patients soon after diagnosis through to the end of treatment and this helps improve outcomes. Fighting Fit Sessions are part of this strategy and are held in Mablethorpe and in Boston. The scheme also employs 3.2 whole time equivalent psychologists and a video therapy service. More positive support in the community especially given East Lindsey's rurality is also being looked at.

*Full details of all the Cancer Care and Living with Cancer initiatives are available on the Lincolnshire County Council Health Scrutiny website.

Nuclear Medicine - A decision was taken last year to centralise this service at Lincoln County Hospital, going ahead despite some misgivings about service closures in Boston and Grantham. The unit at Boston has recently been demolished to make way for the new Accident and Emergency Department. The centralisation move will help recruitment and retention considerably and it is hoped to be able to home grow new recruits very soon along with creating apprenticeships. New equipment has been ordered and will arrive later in the autumn and this will prove invaluable for patients suffering irritable bowel syndrome and diarrhoea. It is hoped that the new cameras and fully centralising the system at Lincoln will be completed by April 2024.

Children and Young People's Mental Health Services Update - More children than ever are accessing the services but unfortunately Lincolnshire is not yet achieving the national target based on population data. The service is striving to make it much easier for families and professionals to access advice and support with a number of ways now being available for families to access the service without having to navigate through different referral pathways. Half of all life-long mental health problems in the UK start before the age of 14 and three quarters before the age of 25. Sadly the pandemic exacerbated children's mental health needs and this continues to grow. Risk factors include childhood abuse, trauma or neglect, poverty, bereavement or being a long-term carer for someone. Understanding these factors helps the service to target prevention activity.

Here4You initiative help-line ;has diverted referrals that would in the past have gone to CAMHS and it is felt that referrals are now being allocated in a more structured and timely way, rather than being indicative of a reduction in demand.

In Lincolnshire children are seen and assessed within four weeks, better than the national target. However, it is reported that there were secondary waits to start NICE recommended treatments. A child experiencing a mental health crisis can contact mental health services directly by ringing Here4You and this phone line is available all day every day. Lincoln County already provides a CAMHS mental health liaison offer at Lincoln and a further centre is being recruited for at Boston. Special support is provided for children experiencing thoughts of suicide or self harm. The service also addresses eating disorders, both within the home and at hospitals local to the East Midlands. Over the last six years services available for children and young people have improved considerably and there has been substantial financial investment over the past three years. There is an ambitious transformation programme underway at present and professionals are confident continuous improvements will be the result.

Older People Mental Health and Dementia Services in Lincolnshire - There is above average growth in the Lincolnshire Over 65 population, specifically in the over 75 category. This, along with the Covid pandemic, has seen continued rise in demand and referrals for both mental health services and in particular dementia related support.

The numbers needing to be referred for dementia assessment and more complex mental health presentation are growing and some waiting lists are higher than the service wishes to see. So the Lincolnshire Partnership Trust is optimising its current resources and innovating to increase its capacity to meet the changing needs of the population. There is now a Lincolnshire Dementia Strategy designed to include the community, voluntary and social enterprise sector to provide a wide range of support and resources to improve access, transition and care for people experiencing dementia at all stages of their wellbeing.

There is a wide variety of professionals working in a multi-disciplinary way across the three service pathways and these range from psychiatrists, nurses, social workers, occupational therapists and support staff and new roles include memory assessment practitioners, waiting well workers, psychological intervention facilitators and advanced clinical practitioners. Comprehensive assessments are completed as quickly as possible and patients then receive the appropriate support for their needs. Waits do vary according to the referral type and locality teams. There are generally longer waits for memory assessments. All teams have a duty worker system so that anyone calling in with issues or concerns will receive a response the same day.

Home Treatment Teams have been set up and hospital at home, seven day a week, schemes are available This avoids unnecessary hospital admission. There is also a step down support system in place to enable safe discharges.

Crisis Support is provided by adult crisis teams but at present this does not include dementia and this is now to be looked at as part of the current service review.

It was agreed more needed to be done to address to growing need for support for dementia patients in particular but services continue to be improved and enhanced. There has been increased investment to expand the current workforce to meet this rising demand. Workforce remains the service's biggest challenge but efforts are being made to attract more people to come to Lincolnshire to take up posts and also the service is working to grow its own workforce of the future.

Humber Acute Services Review - After intensive negotiation this group has agreed to attend at the Lincolnshire Health Scrutiny meeting, hopefully next month but failing this in November which is within the consultation period of 12 weeks. Services at Scunthorpe Hospital are to undergo greater change than those proposed for Grimsby, which is good news for East Lindsey but more of a challenge for residents living in the West Lindsey area.

Councillor Jill Makinson-Sanders
ELDC Outside Body Appointee.