

## Item 5: Covid-19 response and restart of NHS services

By: Kay Goldsmith, Scrutiny Research Officer

To: Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 17 September 2020

Subject: Covid-19 response and restart of NHS services

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Summary: This report invites the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the information provided by Kent & Medway CCG.

It provides background information which may prove useful to Members.

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### 1) Introduction

- a) On 22 July 2020, HOSC received an update on the local NHS response to covid-19. It was explained that the local NHS was focussing on three overarching issues:
  - i) Ensuring there is sufficient capacity to care for people who continue to be infected with Covid-19.
  - ii) Restart non-Covid-19 services.
  - iii) Meet the increased demand across rehabilitation and mental health services for those affected by Covid-19 either directly or indirectly.
- b) Members were particularly keen to understand the impact on the waiting lists for services that were stopped during the height of the pandemic, such as diagnostic screening for cancer. The Kent and Medway CCG endeavoured to provide this information for Members at the next meeting.
- c) On 31 July 2020, the NHS Chief Executive and Chief Operating Officer sent a joint letter to all NHS providers and commissioners regarding the start of phase three of the covid-19 recovery programme. The priorities set out were:
  - i) Accelerating the return to near-normal levels of non-Covid health services, making full use of the capacity available in the 'window of opportunity' between now and winter
  - ii) Preparation for winter demand pressures, alongside continuing vigilance in the light of further probable Covid spikes locally and possibly nationally.
  - iii) Doing the above in a way that takes account of lessons learned during the first Covid peak; locks in beneficial changes; and explicitly tackles fundamental challenges including: support for our staff, and action on inequalities and prevention.<sup>1</sup>
- d) The Kent and Medway CCG have provided the attached update paper and will be in attendance at the meeting to answer questions.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/07/Phase-3-letter-July-31-2020.pdf>

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- e) Possible lines of questioning based on Members prior discussions on this topic:
- Have Breast and Bowel diagnostic screening services restarted?
  - What has the impact been on waiting lists for routine elective procedures as well as Referral to Treatment times?
  - Is the local relationship with the independent sector continuing to assist with recovery and reducing wait times?
  - How are Emergency Departments preparing for possible increased demand (following a fall during phase 1 of the pandemic), and what is being done to ensure patients know the best facility for them to visit (i.e. Accident & Emergency, Urgent Treatment Centre, GP surgery).
  - What has been the impact on demand for mental health services, and is there adequate capacity to meet this demand?
  - What has the impact been on Local Care, in terms of facilitating the drive for freeing up capacity in secondary care by improving the capacity and services of primary care?

### **2) Recommendation**

RECOMMENDED that the Committee consider and note the report.

### **Background Documents**

Kent County Council (2020) '*Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (22/07/20)*', <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=112&MId=8496&Ver=4>

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