

SHROPSHIRE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

Meeting Date: 9th September 2021

Paper title: Board members response to Healthwatch Spotlight report – remote appointments

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1. Summary

An agenda item at the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) meeting held on the 8th July 2021 was Healthwatch Shropshire's Spotlight report – remote appointments. Following a presentation of the report findings and recommendations, the HWBB Chair requested that Board members respond to the recommendations made in this report.

An email request was sent to HWBB members following the meeting, and a further follow-up reminder with a deadline date. Partner responses are provided in the main report, which ranged from a detailed - Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin CCG to shorter responses – Shropshire Council Adult Social Care, fully supporting the recommendations in the report.

2. Recommendations

That the Board notes the responses.

3. Report

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Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin CCG

Recommendation 1: Inform the public that phone, video and on-line appointments are being used to triage patients and make sure people receive a face-to-face appointment if it is necessary and with the most appropriate professional, e.g. doctor, nurse, social worker.

- Pre-pandemic, many practices were already utilising telephone triaging and online booking. The options available for patients to access primary care services have been communicated on CCG website and practice websites.

- Resources for various national NHS campaigns over the pandemic period which inform people about accessing appointments are being utilised by primary care. Campaigns include 'Help Us Help You', 'Your Practice Team is here to Help You' and 'NHS 111'. The information has been made available online via websites and through face book and twitter, in addition to displaying traditional paper posters where this has been possible over the covid period. Wider public facing media resources have been used such as various press releases and regular BBC Shropshire radio interviews have taken place with GPs and other medical professionals talking about how to get appointments and what is available for patients.
- GP Access toolkits have been shared with GPs and practices. The toolkit, which included posters, website messages, videos and social media messages, was issued in February this year and was updated in May following further updates. The toolkit has been developed so that practices can use the information quickly at busy times.
- The CCG in preparing messages about how GPs services are working differently have done so alongside Telford Patients First Group, Shropshire Patient Group and the individual Patient Participation Groups to help tailor messaging for patients. However we acknowledge feedback that not everyone has heard this message and we are committed to working with the public to increase awareness of the different appointment and triage methods in place.

Recommendation 2: Fully implement the NHS Accessible Information Standard to make sure the communication needs and preferences of all people and their carers (if relevant) are known, recorded, shared across services and acted upon.

- All organisations that provide NHS care are legally required to follow the Accessible Information Standard. The CCG recognises the importance of commitment to this standard and will undertake a review of this as part of our practice visit programme.

Recommendation 3: Provide the public with clear information and instructions about how to set up and use the software needed to access video appointments and electronic consultations (e.g. e-Consult, the NHS App). This information should also be available in Easy Read.

- There are a range of readily available resources provided on how to access the electronic platforms and NHS APP in use in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin. We have reminded our practices and providers to ensure that the literature is displayed on their websites and made available as appropriate in practices, There are links on practice websites explaining on how to register for Apps including video links for how to use e-consult.
- Whilst there are a range of resources available the CCG acknowledges there may be other means of promoting and assisting people to engage with these APPs and are reviewing what other measure may be feasible to assist. As social distancing guidelines lift, this could include linking in with wider partners around available community resources linked to accessing and using IT.

Recommendation 4: Provide training for professionals about how to manage a phone or video consultation/meeting to make sure people have the opportunity to share any concerns and ask questions.

- Training on the utilisation of the various platforms is offered by the provider of the platform and does give clear guidance on the requirement to build in the opportunity for users to share concerns/ ask questions.
- We will investigate opportunities to offer further training and development to our providers through avenues such as practices Protected Learning Time. The CCG recognise and acknowledge the importance of ensuring that we are fully promoting and facilitating these new means of consultations with a clear “patient focused approach”.

Recommendation 5: Share the Healthwatch England guidance on ‘Getting the most out of the virtual health and care experience’ which gives tips for the public and professionals.

- The CCG can confirm they shared this guidance with our providers

Shropshire Community Health Trust

We support remote appointments. Many of our services are provided within people’s homes and we have continued to do this throughout COVID. We do run Outpatients and clinic based services, and we work on the basis that we provide remote appointments where this is clinically possible, but obviously with some treatments these need to be done within a clinical area, so we very much use a mixed approach based on clinical need and on discussion and support of the patients/carers needs and requirements.

The report has been circulated to our operational and clinical teams for review and to support any improvements and changes to the pathways that we provide.

Shropshire Council: Public Health

Healthwatch reports are shared with the HWBB Comms and Engagement group to cascade through their networks.

The report has been shared on the Council website [Who sits on the Health and Wellbeing Board? | Shropshire Council](#), alongside links to other Healthwatch reports.

During COVID-19, the Social Prescribing Programme made adjustments to support people on the telephone. On-line communication was not used, just telephone support so there were no technical barriers or confidence issues for clients to overcome. Telephone consultations have gone well from an advisor point of view, and from feedback received from Social Prescribing clients. Advisors are meeting face to face in a small number of cases where the client’s needs require this e.g. for those with communication barriers and learning difficulties.

Primary Care worked alongside Public Health to make the changes needed to continue to support people through Social Prescribing, and the offer was extended to support the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable.

[Healthwatch Spotlight report on remote appointments.](#) and [Getting the most out of the virtual health and care experience | Healthwatch](#) have been forwarded to the Programme Lead who has looked through these reports and resources, and found ‘Dr Zoom top Tips’ particularly valuable. This has been shared with all the advisors as a quick reminder of the issues to think through.

Shropshire Council Adult Social Care

Confirmed they are fully in support of the recommendations of the Healthwatch Shropshire report on remote appointments and suggest it would be helpful to monitor the impact.

Cabinet Member for Communities, Place, Tourism & Transport

Responded that the recommendations appear eminently sensible.

MPFT

Confirmed they are happy to support.

The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (RJAH) fully support the recommendations and are ensuring these are fully embedded.

They have asked for these to go through their Patient Experience Committee.

4. Risk assessment and opportunities appraisal

(NB This will include the following: Risk Management, Human Rights, Equalities, Community, Environmental consequences and other Consultation)

The responses in this collated summary address the impact of remote appointments on the public.

5. Financial implications

None in this report

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) or your organisational lead e.g. Exec lead or Non-Exec/Clinical Lead
Cllr Dean Carroll – Portfolio holder for Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Assets
Appendices