

Working together during the second and third waves of covid19

How independent primary, community and
diagnostic providers have supported the NHS
during the pandemic



Foreword



The coronavirus pandemic has tested the health service, and indeed the country as a whole, like never before. But the last year has also been a time when healthcare providers have truly stepped up to the plate, with staff showing an extraordinary commitment and determination to ensure patients can continue to get the treatment they need in the most challenging of circumstances.

In our first report published in Summer 2020, “Working together during covid19”, we highlighted the key role independent providers of primary, community and diagnostics services have played in supporting the NHS during the first wave of covid. Quickly adapting their services to ensure patients could continue to receive treatment in a safe and timely way, independent providers supported the NHS in numerous ways – including switching from face-to-face to virtual consultations and repurposing their services to help support the NHS as “hot” or “cold” sites.

Independent sector providers make up a considerable proportion of providers that deliver NHS-funded primary, community and diagnostic care and their support has continued throughout the second and third waves of the pandemic.

This new report pays tribute to their work and highlights the numerous ways independent providers have stepped up. Whether that’s work to provide extensive virtual support for parents, young people and families across Essex; support to rapidly increase covid19 testing and the deployment of their mobile clinical research facility to help support the development of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine; or working to roll out the

NHS’ Covid Oximetry @ Home service to support the treatment of patients with covid symptoms in their own homes. And not forgetting the countless providers redeploying their staff to help support the vaccine rollout.

But while covid cases have now thankfully reduced, with pressures easing on the health service, this does not mean the end of independent sector support for the NHS. Quite the reverse. Independent providers are committed to supporting the NHS and building on this partnership working – locking in some of the key innovations that have come about during the pandemic and ensuring patients can access the care they need in their local communities.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Hare". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small dot at the end of the last name.

David Hare
Chief Executive, IHPN

18 week support

working with the NHS to help clear the elective care backlog

18 Week Support operates a clinical insourcing model which provides NHS trusts with expert clinical teams to work in their hospitals when there is spare capacity, typically at weekends, to help clear backlogs across outpatients, diagnostics and treatments.

Insourcing has proven to be a valuable way for NHS Trusts to gradually return to pre-Covid levels of care. At the same time, their partnership working allows Trusts to significantly increase the number of their patients that are seen by clinicians, delivering significant reductions in waiting lists and meeting RTT (Referral to Treatment) targets across a range of specialties. Insourcing provides this with minimal disruption while all the time keeping patient treatment within their local hospital where patients are accustomed to receiving their care.

During the lockdown, 18 Week Support teams have helped 33 NHS Trusts deliver a comprehensive range of services including outpatient consultations, day case and inpatient procedures across the spectrum of clinical specialties including endoscopy, dermatology, ophthalmology, general surgery, urology and orthopaedic surgery.

30,000

patients treated

In that time – between September 1st 2020 and March 31st 2021 -18 Week Support teams have seen well in excess of 30,000 patients, giving their NHS Trust partners much-needed flexibility, freeing up their resources to focus on other priority areas for patients, a key need given the impact of Covid across all areas of elective and non-elective care.

Examples of their work include reducing the backlog of at-risk patients, including cancer patients, at Medway NHS Foundation Trust, delivering more than 10,000 endoscopy procedures for Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital and 24 consecutive weekends of clinical support across many specialties (from general surgery and vascular through to dermatology and colorectal) for The Princess Alexandra NHS Trust in Essex.



We already had a pre-COVID partnership with 18 Week Support and the Will Adams Treatment Centre (Practice Plus Group) to manage significant referrals for endoscopy. With the abrupt cessation of all but the very urgent endoscopic diagnostics across the NHS, Medway leadership decided to explore the feasibility of continuing the existing partnership arrangements, which would support patient care at a cold site location. Robust clinical governance was developed by Dr Matt Banks at 18 Week Support and the Upper and Lower GI consultants at MFT. In the spirit of true partnership working, all stakeholders were asked to sign and authorise the pathway, which included COVID Swabbing, PPE usage and triage against criteria. Ultimately, this approach ensured that Medway patients, who were on 2 Week Wait cancer pathways, continued to be seen in a safe manner.

Paula Tinniswood, Medway NHS Foundation Trust



Alliance Medical

working with the NHS to deliver vital diagnostics care

Alliance Medical (AML) has continued to support the NHS since the start of the covid19 pandemic and into the second and third waves – helping to ensure NHS Trusts can maintain vital scanning capacity in a safe and covid secure environment whilst maintaining the highest standards of patient care and experience throughout.

Alliance Medical has continued to provide its national PET-CT service across the NHS England network, to ensure that vital cancer diagnostic scans were carried out and delivered at the shortest possible referral to report times within seven days. To date the Alliance Medical CT national service has scanned over 220,000 NHS patients in 44 locations across England through the pandemic.

over
220,000
scans delivered



Alliance Medical have also provided a network of MRI services whilst also retraining over 60 MRI Radiographers in its rapid CT Training Academy which has helped boost the CT Radiographer availability to support the NHS in England. AML have also provided a mobile network of 16 fully staffed CT scanners to create increased CT scanning capacity at such a crucial time for the NHS.



The Alliance CT van that was provided through central CT mobile provision (NHSE) was invaluable to SFHT during the recovery period post wave 1 of Covid. We were able to recover our CT service to near 100% by Sept 2020 with the addition of the Alliance mobile, supporting the reduction in capacity due to social distancing measures required within the static CT department and increase in ITU CT scans for Covid patients. The Alliance CT mobile has fitted into our service very well, providing a 12 hour day service for outpatient CT with contrast, following SFHT protocols and liaising well with our static CT department.

Radiology Services Manager, Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Trust

Capita

working with the NHS to deliver an agile response in disruptive times

Working in partnership to deliver better outcomes for patients and those who serve them Capita has worked closely with Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust to ensure that the continued disruption caused by Covid has been managed with minimal impact to the care provided by the Trust.

Capita's IT team have supported the Trust to extend its VPN (virtual private network) services to support a 200% increase in remote access and speed up the rollout of laptops and smartphones to clinicians, distributing 1,000 pieces of equipment to date. The deployment process was amended to integrate with NHS Smartcards – removing the need for 1,245 site visits for equipment pickups. The team have deployed a BlueJeans video conferencing solution, enabling 100,000 virtual patient contacts, and reducing the need for in person patient appointments, protecting both staff and patients.

Capita's estates and facilities teams have also supported clinical services across 120 sites, delivering vital services within a complex system of restrictions and Covid-safe working practices. They are responsible for Covid measures across the sites – implementing roughly 20,000 items of compliance. The team was recognised with a Corporate Team of the Year Award in the CLCH Staff Awards.



1000 pieces of vital equipment distributed



This period meant that many staff had no breaks throughout this period from September 2020 to April 2021. The teams felt part of the NHS family and have pulled together with their front-line colleagues to ensure CLCH can deliver better outcomes for patients.

Ian Daccus, Estates and Facilities Strategic Partnership Director Capita/CLCH

Connect Health

working with the NHS to provide remote physio support

Over the last year Connect Health has been working closely with their NHS partners in a number of ways to support patients and colleagues. This includes supporting the Nightingale hospitals, redeploying clinicians on the front line and vaccination centres.

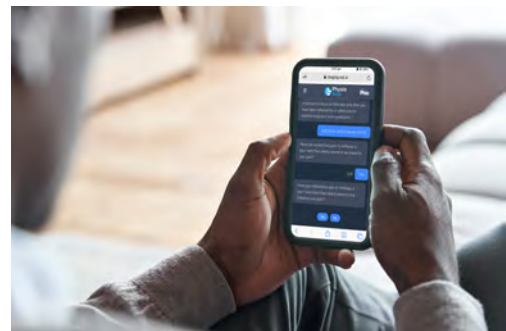
As part of their work to support the NHS, Connect's PhysioNow® digital triage solution, which provides clinically led remote triage and support for musculoskeletal conditions 24/7, has provided much needed support for NHS patients when face to face appointments were not possible or unavailable. This includes in London where Connect has started supporting the NHS orthopaedic waiting list in the capital, with 1,000 patients now having access to PhysioNow® free of charge - picking up urgent needs, making available ongoing physiotherapy during the time they are waiting for elective care.

Across the country, Connect Health has also provided the NHS 250,000 pain, MSK and rheumatology appointments throughout the second and third waves of covid, including 35,015 face to face; and 16,178 video consultations with an average waiting time of 10 days (compared to the national average wait for an MSK appointment of between 1-3 months) and scoring over 88% on the NHS Friends and Family Test.

A number of Connect Health's teams are volunteering to support the national Covid19 vaccination efforts out of hours, and in Wolverhampton they are also running vaccine clinics. A number of Connect Health staff are also currently redeployed in North East London Foundation Trust.

250,000

pain, MSK and rheumatology appointments delivered



Quote from North East London NHS Foundation Trust, where Connect Health staff are currently redeployed.

Thank you for all your hard work during what has been a very different situation. You are an excellent role model for staff and have provided outstanding leadership on the ward since you have been there. Your patient care has also resulted in the clear improvement in patient's outcomes and pathways. It has been appreciated your ability to problem solve issues that have arisen and manage emergency situations in a calm and effective manner. I have received further feedback from your colleagues about what a brilliant clinician, leader and colleague you are. You are a true asset to your organisation.

Megan Lincoln, Operational Lead for AHP, Brentwood Hospital, North East London NHS FT



Diagnostic Healthcare

working with the NHS to provide diagnostic imaging services



Diagnostic Healthcare (DHC) have continued to provide diagnostic imaging services throughout the pandemic, initially to the secondary care sector and subsequently to the primary care sector when services were able to resume.

One of their key achievements has been to work in partnership with the CCGs and Trusts to enable any backlogs to be cleared quickly, supporting the full range of imaging services: MRI / CT /XRAY/ Ultrasound and DEXA from both their static locations and within their mobile fleet of scanners.

One such example is bone density scanning in Bolton where DHC have been able to support both the CCG and the Trust in clearing waiting lists. They have provided a community DEXA service (a high-precision type of X-ray that measures how strong bones are) in Bolton since 2018 imaging both community and Trust patients from our clinic in Brightmet. This service ceased from April 2020, resuming again in August 2020 with a four month waiting list to clear.

To do so DHC tripled capacity from August 2020 by extending days and working weekends and by October 2020 the routine service was running as normal, with directly bookable appointments available within 10 working days.

3x DEXA capacity to get services back to normal

Bolton CCG has benefited from working in partnership, with DHC able to predict, plan and react quickly to the CCG's needs to minimise service interruption. Moreover, the DEXA arrangements implemented by DHC are a reflection of the challenging times within radiology departments currently trying to clear covid19 backlogs to get back to some normality. DHC has replicated the DEXA service model across other modalities in other Trusts to support them back to normal routine work. For example, DHC provide extended hours of 2 mobile MRI scanners to put additional capacity into the system.



During an extremely worrying period for our Bolton population we have been pleased to work closely with Diagnostic Healthcare to continue the provision of the DEXA scan service. Despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, Diagnostic Healthcare were extremely pro-active in engaging their business continuity plans and offering safe and effective service delivery as quickly as possible following the initial national lock-down, which saw the closure of elective services. Diagnostic Healthcare offered insightful and thought out solutions to treating our back-log of patients, and did so within a matter of months, resulting in the resumption of a normal service waiting time of 10 days or less from October 2020. This service is a great example of the benefits of collaborative partnership working, excellent communication and pro-active planning.

Gill Baker, Head of Strategic Commissioning – Adult Acute & Community, NHS Bolton Clinical Commissioning Group



EMS Healthcare

working with the NHS to deliver covid testing and clinical research

Throughout the pandemic, EMS Healthcare has supported the NHS with innovative mobile infrastructure partnerships and played a key role in delivering covid19 testing, supporting clinical research and providing much needed ophthalmology, endoscopy and clinical capacity.

As part of the national covid19 testing programme, EMS Healthcare has worked in collaboration with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to increase NHS covid19 testing capacity by 120,000 tests a week and in total has deployed 38 mobile facilities to support the programme, helping the NHS identify coronavirus cases in order to mitigate the spread of the virus.



EMS Healthcare has also developed a mobile clinical research facility for Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust to optimise research capacity on their crowded hospital estate. Deployed within 3 weeks from project confirmation, the unit provided a state-of-the-art facility to support the Trust's clinical trials, which involved over 7,900 participants and assisted in the development of the Oxford- AstraZeneca vaccine.

As NHS elective activity have begun to resume towards the end of 2020, EMS Healthcare has also supported several Trusts with COVID-secure endoscopy units. Already utilising one unit at full capacity, a second Trilogy+ mobile endoscopy unit was deployed to Ashford and St Peter's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust earlier this year. By moving the patient cohort in to a covid-secure environment, the Trust could continue to boost their endoscopy service without increasing footfall in the main hospital building.

EMS Healthcare has worked with the Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust to develop a BSL2 mobile laboratory unit to conduct covid19 LAMP testing on frontline NHS staff. The laboratory travels between the Trust's hospital sites to screen for asymptomatic carriers and keep keyworkers and patients safe.

Increased NHS covid19 testing capacity by
120,000 tests a week



Healthcare at Home

working with the NHS to deliver “virtual wards”

Throughout the pandemic, Healthcare at Home have been working with Kettering General Hospital NHS Foundation Trust to meet the increased demand for beds and improve patient flow as part of its Virtual Ward service that has been in place since 2018. The Virtual Ward is the facilitation of a patient from hospital to their own home, coordinated by a team of doctors, nurses, healthcare support workers and therapists.

Medical care and treatment and any specialist rehabilitation required are then provided in the patient’s own home - including wound care, drain and catheter care, physiotherapy, rehabilitation, and specialist care, such as the diabetic foot clinic. There are no exclusion criteria and patients with a wide range of medical conditions, including severe long-term issues, can benefit from the service. These include patients from trauma and orthopaedics and general surgery including ENT, as well as general medicine, encompassing diabetes, stroke, cardiology, neurology, and many more.

The Virtual Ward service proved invaluable during the covid19 pandemic, helping the trust adapt quickly and innovatively in a challenging and rapidly moving situation, and has cared for approximately 80–100 patients at any given time. Multidisciplinary team meetings with consultants have taken place virtually to support clinical decision making, prioritise early and safe discharges of appropriate patients and agree on vital care and rehabilitation plans. The Virtual Ward service has evolved to become an intrinsic part of the trust’s operations and is now a fully integrated, cost-efficient care system that continues to reap significant benefits for patients and clinicians alike.



Healthcare at Home provides an excellent service and working with them is a pleasure. They are adaptable, compassionate, and dedicated. What I particularly value from the team is their ability to challenge our internal practices and engage openly so that we continually raise the bar, enhancing the treatment and care pathways for all our patients.

Chief of the Family Health Division and Chief Pharmacist, Kettering General Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

HealthHarmonie

working with the NHS to clear the elective care backlog

Throughout the covid19 pandemic, HealthHarmonie's focus has been to provide much needed additional capacity to ensure the continuation of vital elective care. In the last six months alone, HealthHarmonie have undertaken 85,000 patient appointments, including 10,000 surgical procedures - providing innovative delivery solutions to meet the objectives of their NHS partners and supporting the health of their local populations.

At the end of 2020, HealthHarmonie began work with Walsall Health-care NHS Trust to assist with Gynaecology Waiting List support. This work focused on increasing capacity levels for Gynaecology patients, to help reduce waiting times for patients. As part of this partnership, HealthHarmonie established a local community-based service and since it opened to patients in January 2021, it has seen over 100 routine patients, allowing the hospital to prioritise their more complex patients and reduce the number of patients attending hospital-based appointments during the pandemic.



HealthHarmonie has also worked closely with University Hospital Birmingham (UHB), carrying out Ophthalmology image screening in Birmingham & Solihull community settings for over 900 patients in the last 6 months. The partnership has enabled HealthHarmonie to capture required diagnostic eye images within the community, which are uploaded via secure platforms for UHB Consultant review and ongoing Management Plan coordination. Patient feedback to this new venture has been fantastic, with appreciation of safe community settings and ability to continue eye care reviews during the pandemic.

10,000

surgical procedures
delivered



HealthHarmonie have also worked closely with Trusts across the UK including University Hospital North Midlands (UHNM) and Nottingham University Hospital (NUH) to deliver Non-Obstetric Ultrasound scanning in a community setting, achieving 14-day referral receipt to diagnostic review timeframes. Additional capacity provision has enabled Trusts across the UK to achieve its Diagnostic Waiting List target.

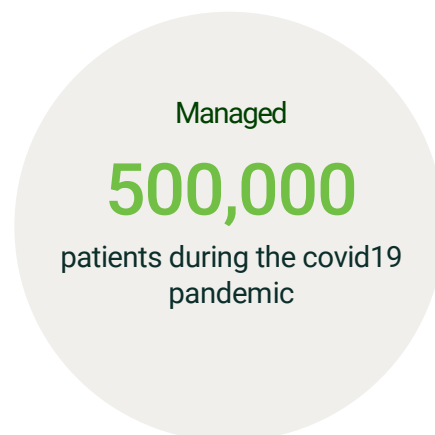
Healthshare

working with the NHS to deliver MSK services and diagnostics testing

Healthshare has been proud to support the NHS in a number of different ways throughout the pandemic. This includes supporting NHS Trusts in both Hull and Kings Lynn by supplying mobile CT units directly to the hospital sites. This partnership working has increased the hospitals diagnostic capacity allowing them to work through the backlog of patients waiting for their scans. The state-of-the-art scanners are manned by Healthshare Radiographers 7am-7pm, 7 days a week.

Across the UK Healthshare deployed Extended Scope Physiotherapists and First Contact Practitioners to support the rollout of the vaccination programme within both community vaccination hubs and GP practices. The staff were eager to volunteer and proved that they were highly skilled and adaptable, with the ability to transfer their skills to other areas.

Healthshare Physiotherapists were also deployed from the Oxfordshire MSK service to support their local partners Oxford Health and Oxford University Hospitals throughout the third wave of the pandemic. The wider healthcare system came under extreme clinical pressure, and there was an urgent need for immediate support across Oxfordshire. Healthshare Physiotherapists and Extended Scope Practitioners worked within the existing community, ICU, acute medicine and urgent care teams, to bring much needed additional clinical resource and expertise.



We would like to thank Healthshare for their outstanding support throughout the pandemic. The increase in clinical resource they provided allowed the acute and community teams to deliver 7-day services to ensure patients received the treatment they needed, and that patients were discharged without delay with the appropriate support and care in place. This also freed up urgent care beds for patients who desperately required medical care within the hospitals.

Sharon Barrington, Head of Planned Care and Long-Term Conditions at Oxfordshire CCG

Homelink Healthcare

working with the NHS to improve patient flow through covid testing

As part of the third phase of the NHS response to covid19, there has been a key focus on restoring and recovering NHS services, and the need for patients to be screened for Covid and then self-isolate 72 hours prior to elective hospital admission is critical to ensuring that elective surgery can go ahead as planned.

From October 2020, HomeLink Healthcare have provided additional testing capacity to Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (NNUHT), helping to prevent cancellations of elective surgery by offering covid19 screening at home.

As part of their work to deliver covid testing in the community for housebound patients prior to pre-elective surgery, HomeLink Healthcare called patients in advance and agreed a one-hour window for testing. This resolved the challenges reported by community teams of the patient not being at home on the agreed day.

Surgeries prevented from being cancelled at last minute

To maximise responsiveness, HomeLink Healthcare also used real-time data and analytics to provide same day reporting back to the Hospital Trust. Their advanced scheduling tools ensured that the clinical staff were deployed efficiently. As a result, patients were ready and available for their scheduled surgery.

Overall, the availability of tests at home has helped reduce inequalities in access to care; prevented surgeries being cancelled at the last minute, and increased capacity for the NNUHT team to focus on other urgent covid work, in the confidence that this service is being efficiently managed. Due to the disruption caused by the pandemic, some patients may have been waiting longer than usual to access elective services and being able to plan and maintain scheduled appointments has been imperative to patients' physical and mental health and wellbeing.



Having HomeLink to support us is fantastic as it means we have a trusted and experienced team supporting our elective patient pathway – this provides real peace of mind and their willingness to diversify and respond so quickly really has saved us from having to cancel operations so thank you HomeLink for stepping in and stepping up.

Cursty Pepper, Emergency & Urgent Care Performance & Recovery Operations Director,
Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

InHealth

working with the NHS to deliver vital CT scanning

Since the start of the pandemic, InHealth has firmly supported the NHS, re-orientating their entire organisation to respond to the challenges being faced across healthcare. Alongside creating flexibility within their own workforce to become extended members of the NHS team, InHealth have repurposed clinical services and dedicated equipment, facilities and resource to the pandemic, adding as much capacity to the NHS as possible, through their team of 2,500 healthcare professionals. Specifically, they have supported both CT services and the NHS 111 service.

InHealth's entire fleet of CT scanners remains dedicated to the NHS, a contract which started in April 2020 and continues into 2021, and in total, has seen more than 75,000 patients since the start of the pandemic.

And at the request of the London Ambulance Service (LAS), we repurposed our 120-seat Patient Referral Centre in Rochdale to support handling covid19 calls. In total, InHealth has taken more than 300,000 calls since the start of April 2020, with 50,000 since September 2020.

over
75,000
patients seen



Working with InHealth and using their fleet of CT mobiles has always been about ensuring great outcomes for patients, since inception back in April 2020. Their dedication to the success of the contract has been second to none, with great attention to detail and invaluable knowledge of clinical and operational practices. We very much see this partnership with InHealth as best in class when it comes to working with stakeholders within NHSEI.

Lana Williams, Head of Productivity Midlands Region, NHSEI

Mediservices

working with the NHS to deliver vital neurophysiology diagnostic services

Throughout the pandemic, MediServices Healthcare have worked closely with New Cross Hospital, part of the Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust and one of the largest acute and community providers in the West Midlands, to help increase capacity and lower waiting times for patients. In 2020 MediServices saw approximately 1540 patients at New Cross Hospital, a timely and efficient access to high quality neurophysiology diagnostic services including nerve conduction studies and electromyogram (EMG) tests. As part of this partnership, specialist Consultants, Practitioners and Health Care Assistants were able to bridge staffing gap by holding clinics seven days a week, with reporting from clinical to consulting teams within 2 - 3 days.

over
1500
patients seen



We have worked with MediServices for over 12 months and developed a close working partnership with both the visiting neurophysiologists and health care assistants. Their continuing professionalism and commitment to support our neurophysiology service has enabled our neurophysiology service in Wolverhampton to maintain waiting times and provide patients with a first-rate service. The neurophysiologists and HCAs have seamlessly integrated into the team, quickly adapting to our routine of working, but more importantly have been friendly and willing to help with any issues.

We have utilised MediServices in a variety of ways, to reduce EMG and EEG waiting lists or to cover Consultant leave and MediServices have accommodated our needs with no fuss negotiating the best arrangement to provide a complete service.

Patients have nothing but praise for all the MediServices personnel, complimenting them on their kindness and ability to make them, as patients, feel relaxed and at ease. Reports have been concise and completed quickly with referring clinicians happy with the studies performed.

Stephanie Collins, Assistant Manager Neurophysiology Department, New Cross Hospital

MSI Reproductive Choices

working with the NHS to deliver vital sexual and reproductive health services



Not-for profit charitable provider, MSI Reproductive Choices UK (MSIUK), has managed to deliver a consistent abortion

service without interruption throughout the COVID crisis. Within six days of the initial lockdown, an innovative new telemedicine service with enhanced safeguarding

pathways was set up. Since then, MSIUK has treated over 11,250 NHS patients through the new pathway - offering improved access especially for the most vulnerable through maintaining local services and digitally enhanced communication channels. As a result, there has been a significant reduction in waiting times for all types of abortions across MSIUK services, driving down average gestation per patient to less than 7 weeks, thereby reducing overall clinical risk. MSIUK subsequently won the 2020 Nursing Times "Team of the Year" award in recognition of its patient centred actions.

MSIUK has also been proactive in supporting the provision of sexual and reproductive health services, by extending their Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC) service to a number of local authorities across the country.

over
11,000
patients treated

Since September 2020, over 1800 NHS patients have accessed the new 'stand-alone' MSIUK contraception service that they otherwise would not have been able to. Additionally, MSIUK has also supported several NHS Trusts nationally in reducing their waiting lists through the Increasing Capacity Framework in the delivery of vasectomy services.



I'd just like to thank you for all your hard work to get this service up and running so quickly, we really appreciate the speed and professionalism with which you've mobilised the new clinics.

CCG Commissioner, Jan 2021

Improved access to abortion care has been one of the few positive things to come out of the pandemic – patients now benefit from shorter waits, vulnerable groups are better served and the whole pathway is kinder for patients. Moving forwards, we need to ensure that our patients have the same rights of choice and access to quality, local services as they should expect under the NHS Constitution, and that the sector is funded fairly."

Mr Jonathan Lord, Medical Director MSI Reproductive Choices & Consultant, Royal Cornwall NHS Hospitals Trust

Newmedica

working with the NHS to deliver vital ophthalmology services



Over the course of the pandemic, over 4,000 patients have been transferred to Newmedica eye health clinics and surgical centres across England by the NHS locally.

While the majority of these appointments have been for cataract surgery and follow up, patients have also been able to attend Newmedica clinics for treatment for glaucoma and wet age-related macular degeneration (AMD).

The scheme has had clear benefits for patients, who have been able to receive faster treatment and care, but also for the NHS. The programme has focused on patients who have been waiting the longest for treatment, so people have been seen in order of need. In the south west, Newmedica Bristol has seen one of the largest numbers of transferred patients at over 1,500.

over
30,000
patients treated

The support of Newmedica Grimsby has proved to be vital in helping local CCGs and Trusts in North East Lincolnshire manage capacity issues. Newmedica has also responded to requests from the NHS to train junior doctors.

Following the framework for training in the Independent sector, announced by Health Education England in December 2020, Newmedica is welcoming ophthalmology trainees whose training has been disrupted by the pandemic.



Newmedica Bristol and Frome have been delighted to provide support to the local hospitals whilst these hospitals continue managing emergencies, urgent and complex cases.

We continue to work closely with the Bristol Eye Hospital, Royal United Hospital Bath and Salisbury Foundation Trust in order that they can reprioritise their own ophthalmology care, using the available capacity in the local system to support patient flow.

Working closely with the respective CCGs and secondary care hospitals, Newmedica Bristol has increased its capacity utilising their skills and expertise, and through the experience of our ophthalmology staff.

Julian Phillips, Operational Director at Newmedica Bristol



We have worked with Newmedica for many years addressing capacity issues within ophthalmology locally, but the last year has highlighted even more difficulty in supporting the local acute system to deliver outpatient follow ups and some surgical capacity, as COVID 19 restricted access for patients. Flexibility by all partners and the willingness to do all we can to treat patients as safely and quickly as possible was evidence of useful joint working.

Eddie McCabe, Assistant Director of contracting and performance at North East Lincolnshire CCG

OneMedical Group

working with the NHS to relieve pressures in primary care

OneMedical Group has been liaising closely with their commissioners, local Primary Care Networks (PCNs) and urgent and emergency care partners throughout the pandemic to help support patients and share best practice.

Colleagues across their primary care sites have been busy delivering the national vaccination programme, including those at their brand new Whitehouse Health Centre in Milton Keynes. At the start of the covid19 pandemic, their service delivery model at their Urgent Care Centre based in Bracknell changed to meet local needs and support with the local pandemic response. OneMedical Group collaborated with local Primary Care Networks, the local extended access provider and Frimley Integrated Care System's leader to co-design integrated urgent care pathways to help meet urgent care needs. This involves seeing patients who are booked into OneMedical Group's service via their GP surgeries, through a dedicated acute home visiting team, acute minor illness clinics and paediatric specific appointment slots. The aim of these pathways was to relieve pressures in General Practice by freeing up capacity, so patients with more complex needs could be prioritised.



Thousands of vaccines delivered

OneMedical Group have continued to work with system partners to evolve the pathways to make sure they continually meet needs and demand throughout the pandemic. Since January 2021, the service has evolved and now includes an innovative scheduled minor injuries pathway, that is booked via NHS111 and is based in their original building.



The collaborative and partnership approach OneMedical Group have taken with system partners to develop the new integrated urgent care pathways, to meet the urgent needs of the local population, has been fantastic. These pathways and the joined-up approach has resulted in excellent outcomes.

Katerina Nash, Associate Director of Primary and Community Care – Bracknell Forest

PHL

working with the NHS to deliver support to covid patients in the community

Partnering Health Limited (PHL) has worked closely with the national clinical lead of the Covid Oximetry @ Home service to roll out the service in West Hampshire. The service enables the delivery of remote monitoring of patients with coronavirus symptoms where patients use an oximeter to monitor and report their oxygen saturation levels.

At its peak, PHL received between 10 to 15 referrals per day for covid19 patients to be admitted to the virtual ward, and between 2 to 5 ambulances a day transported patients to hospital for life-saving treatment following their monitoring indicating their condition worsening. Over time, the service developed to accommodate more complex cases seen with the covid19 variants and has evolved to manage patients who are discharged from hospital. All of which has helped to free up even more hospital beds and valuable resources for the critically ill.

PHL was ideally positioned to deliver this service, having extensive experience of remote patient monitoring, and has set up a dedicated clinical team, available 24/7, using technology to enable care provision. Since December 2020, 674 NHS patients have been admitted on the 'virtual ward' as part of the initiative, with 100% of patients surveyed stating that they found the service helpful and would recommend PHL.

PHL have also played a key role in the delivery of NHS Hot Hubs - covid19 specific clinics for patients who present displaying covid19 symptoms, have tested positive for the virus or have a family member that has tested positive. Patients arriving at Hot Hubs are arrived by phone while waiting in their cars, with GPs donning PPE and inviting patients into the clinical rooms for examination.

over
1,000
patients treated

Run by PHL, the New Forest covid19 Hot Hub commenced in November 2020 with a standalone mobile unit that was rapidly deployed and operates completely self-sufficiently with secure wireless connectivity with the HSCN (Health and Social Care Network). The Hot Hub is staffed 7 days a week by either a GP or advanced practitioner and supported by a dedicated receptionist located in the UTC. From December 2020 - March 2021, over 1060 patients have been seen by the Hot Hubs which will remain in place until the end of May 2021.



Practice Plus Group

working with the NHS to deliver vital 111, Out of Hours and GP services

Practice Plus Group are one of England's largest providers of NHS 111 services, typically receiving over 1.6 million calls per year. And throughout the covid19 pandemic they have seen unprecedented surges in demand, with the 400% peak in demand in the first wave leading to a new way of working and supporting the NHS.

400%
increase in
demand for
services

Over the last year, innovation stemming from the crisis has led to greater remote working and technical interfaces for NHS111 advisors to connect immediately to a clinician. And through the need to have social distancing measures in place in contact centres, along with remote working and the introduction of video consultation, this has changed the model and accessibility to clinicians, paving the way for more effective working and better patient experience.

Throughout the pandemic, Practice Plus Group have supported innovative schemes which include vaccinating the homeless; providing assets to support hot covid19 clinics; providing out of hours support in normal hours to relieve pressure on general practice; directing 2 hour disposition cases to general practice into the clinical assessment services to relieve pressure; supporting admission avoidance schemes by providing enhanced clinical advice to Paramedics on scene and adding General Practitioner support to the validation of cases that may otherwise have impacted on the emergency departments. Their General Practices collaborating with 2 PCNs comprising of 12 practice with circa 100,000 patients have already vaccinated c20% of the including patients vaccinated on site, housebound and care homes and went even further with several outreach clinics for the homeless and learning disability students and carers.

PPG were pleased to have their people recognised in the European Contact Centre and Customer Service Awards (ECCCSA) for responding in a crisis, winning Gold for "supporting our people" and Silver for "supporting our patients" and are now focussed on supporting the NHS as part of its longer term recovery.

Specsavers

working with the NHS to deliver community ophthalmic and audiology services

Specsavers provides NHS community ophthalmic and audiology services across the UK and has continued to provide urgent and essential care throughout the pandemic while hospital departments were temporarily closed, and NHS services focused on their Covid response. This included repairing and replacing lost and broken spectacles and hearing aids for NHS staff and key-workers and distributing batteries and spare parts to NHS hospital hearing aid users.



In November, Specsavers was appointed by the Taunton and Somerset Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust to provide audiology services to its patients in the community, including the patient's own home when appropriate. In addition to the planned referrals the Trust had a waiting list of 500 patients. By the end of January 2021, the long waiters had all been assessed and treated and 98% of them reported that they were Satisfied or Very Satisfied with the service.

Specsavers was one of a number of ophthalmic contractors commissioned to provide the NHS Covid Urgent Eyecare Service (CUES) to reduce A&E attendance for minor eye injuries. Specsavers in Milton Keynes had a typical mix of CUES patients. Elderly and clinically vulnerable people were diagnosed remotely for dry eyes and minor infections, provided with advice and recommended over-the-counter treatment which was home-delivered by a local pharmacy. Treatment was provided in store for a gentleman who had been struggling for weeks with an inverted eyelash and a number of patients with lockdown DIY injuries, were able to go home, reassured, after treatment and careful examination to ensure no lasting damage. One seemingly minor, but painful, blow to the eye of a young father while playing with his daughter, was identified as a detached retina, immediately referred to hospital and repaired the same day.

In Lincolnshire, Specsavers is commissioned to provide NHS audiology services across parts of the county, including many remote, rural communities. During the pandemic, the audiology service at University of Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust came under particular pressure and asked Specsavers to help in areas where the community service was not commissioned.

98% patient satisfaction score



From the very first lockdown we had discussions regarding how we could help all patients regardless of who their designated provider was. Lock-downs resulted in long waiting lists for patients in our Trust and once lockdown and shielding began to ease this was especially problematic in the part of the County where there was no AQP contract in place. Specsavers were approached and agreed to support us by taking a number of patients off our waiting list helping us by reducing patient wait times. This has been a successful contract for patients and our Trust reducing wait times significantly.

Anne Hall, Senior Chief Audiologist, United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust

Virgin Care

working with the NHS to deliver vital community care

During the second and third waves of the pandemic, Virgin Care supported the NHS and local authorities across England to keep services running and communities safe. The organisation redeployed almost 100 colleagues to essential services run by other providers, increased community capacity in services such as District Nursing to increase flow from hospitals and avoid admissions and launched and ran new programmes to support the most vulnerable, like the Community Wellbeing Hub in Bath, extensive virtual support for parents, young people and families in 0-19 services, virtual and face to face primary care services in Essex, hot hub Urgent Care Centres in Birmingham and even launched a new Night District Nursing Service in partnership with NHS Frimley Health.

100
colleagues redeployed
across the health
service



And that support has continued. As the New Year brought a change of priority towards the vaccination programme, Virgin Care stepped up – delivering vaccinations itself for housebound patients in Kent, Surrey and Bath and North East Somerset – and by redeploying more colleagues to support an ambitious vaccination programme to counter a surge of cases in Essex.

Virgin Care colleagues in Essex were redeployed to roles in the vaccination programme at major hubs including Chelmsford racecourse from the end of February while 0-19 services continued to operate.

Virgin Care was able to release the colleagues due to its unique outcomes-based model in Essex, allowing it and partners Essex County Council and Barnardo's to continue supporting families with fewer colleagues.

As a result, all essential appointments such as new birth checks within 14 days of a baby's birth and home visits in the second wave continued – including vital face to face support ensuring families and children across Essex, including the most vulnerable in society, were supported.

Group and one-to-one sessions were also delivered virtually over video or telephone contacts, and parents have praised the flexibility that virtual appointments have brought to their busy home and work lives, especially during such a challenging time.



Virgin Care's response to the pandemic has been exemplary – they've embraced this latest redeployment challenge with great willingness, positivity and resolve, whilst being careful to ensure essential services to vulnerable families are maintained. COVID is the single greatest public health challenge the country has seen this century – it makes me proud to see all corners of the health and social care sector, including the children and family services I commission in Essex, working together to deliver this vaccination programme.

Adrian Coggins, Head of Wellbeing and Public Health Commissioning at Essex County Council and commissions the service



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