

The NHS response to COVID-19

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Good practice and innovations to retain

- **More system working, quickly reaching consensus on issues, implementing changes rapidly and providing mutual aid**, e.g. how we increased critical care capacity from 21 to 129 beds, how we rapidly set-up new mental health services, how fire fighters stepped in to drive ambulances and how trusts have shared PPE with practices.
- **Greater use of population health management**, e.g. Covid Protect has enabled us to identify and proactively support those at greatest risk from COVID-19 – 21,000 people are now actively using the system.
- **Digital innovations**, like the significant increase in the use of online, video and telephone consultations (including a 500% increase in non-face-to-face hospital appointments), and using technology to enable staff to work remotely.
- **Increased use of 111 to access health services**, in the way that people with COVID-19 symptoms have been doing.
- **Increased community capacity**, we've opened over 200 beds in community hospitals, residential care and mental health since the start of the pandemic and have plans in place for more.
- **New arrangements for discharging patients**, including the implementation of the discharge hub, D2A and community response teams and agreement of revised CHC assessment / fast track procedures.
- **New mental health services**, including 'First Response', a 24/7 helpline offering immediate support, and Kooth, a counselling and emotional wellbeing support service for young people.
- **Increased workforce**, e.g. people returning to work for the NHS, and staff working flexibly across the system.

Short-term priorities

- **Our immediate focus is on urgent care services and cancer care.** We have been able to maintain many of these services throughout the pandemic, but our immediate priority is restarting those services we couldn't.
- **We are planning for the restoration of more health services from the Autumn.** This phase of the NHS response is operationally focused on restoring wider services and planning for and managing winter. Key elements include:
 - Maintaining our preparedness for another spike or wave of infections, including critical care capacity.
 - Supporting the long-term recovery of people who've had COVID-19 (e.g. by ensuring we have sufficient community capacity – this will also help to reduce the length of time patients stay in our hospitals).
 - Minimising the risks to non-COVID-19 services (e.g. by maintaining separate yellow / green sites, using PPE appropriately and having sufficient diagnostics and testing capacity in place to run services safely).
 - Starting to address the backlog of operations and other planned care.
 - Continuing to restore mental health services (to address both the backlog and the increased need for them).
 - Protecting our staff, e.g. by supporting staff wellbeing and increasing workforce numbers.

Medium and longer term priorities

- **From April 2021, the NHS response is likely to become more strategically focused than the current operational phase**, this may include revised national planning frameworks and potentially new contract and payment frameworks, as well as a review of our local five year plan.
- **But we will still be continuing to respond to the impact that COVID-19 has already had on services**, including addressing the backlog of operations and other planned care, delivering mental health services and meeting the likely increase in demand for them, and providing support for people recovering from the virus.
- **Delivering the three goals in our five-year plan:**
 1. To make sure that people can live as healthy a life as possible. The pandemic has further highlighted why prevention and tackling health inequalities is so important.
 2. To make sure that you only have to tell your story once. Joint working and a more integrated system will enable us to better respond to the challenges that the pandemic has caused, as well as those we already faced.
 3. To make Norfolk and Waveney the best place to work in health and care. Our staff, like all key workers, have gone above and beyond over the last few months – it is imperative that we take action to support them.