

FORTH VALLEY NHS BOARD

TUESDAY 30 MARCH 2021

**8.1 Annual Review Letter 2019/2020
For Assurance**

Executive Sponsor: Mrs Cathie Cowan, Chief Executive

Author: Ms Kerry Mackenzie, Head of Policy & Performance

Executive Summary

The Annual Review 2019/2020 was held via video conference on Friday 11 December 2020 chaired by Mr Joe Fitzpatrick, Public Health Minister and was attended by Janie McCusker, Chair, NHS Forth Valley and Cathie Cowan, Chief Executive, NHS Forth Valley.

Recommendation

The Forth Valley NHS Board is asked to:

- **note** the key points contained in the Annual Review 2019/20 letter

Key Issues to be Considered

Further to the Annual Review 2019/2020 chaired by Mr Joe Fitzpatrick, Ms Jeane Freeman, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport, has written to summarise the main points discussed and to highlight any actions required moving forward.

The letter details the following key points:

- The agenda was split into three sections to cover:
 - pre-Covid performance during 2019/20
 - initial response to the pandemic from February/March to July 2020
 - forward look, in line with the current Board mobilisation plans (August to end of March 2021) and beyond.
- Pre-Covid performance focussed on, the improvements in outpatient waiting times; issues in maintaining the good inpatient and day case performance achieved in the first half of 2019/20 noting the impact of winter and Covid restrictions; the deterioration in unscheduled care performance during the winter of 2019/20; the challenges in achieving the 62-day cancer waiting times target whilst acknowledging the NHS Board met the 31-day cancer target; and, the enhanced improvement support for Mental Health and CAMHS. It was noted that the financial targets were achieved.
- The initial rapid and inclusive response to the pandemic was acknowledged, noting that learning from innovation and new ways of working should be captured to underpin local strategy going forward. In addition, discussions focused on the staff wellbeing agenda.
- The Forward Look focussed on Test & Protect, Flu and Covid Vaccination programmes, and ensuring that the NHS was not overwhelmed by ensuring good winter planning was in place. The redesign of urgent care to support A&E performance and flow was discussed along with an acknowledgement of the focus on integration and whole system working.
- The Board and local staff were thanked for their ongoing, incredible efforts, professionalism and commitment, in the facing of unprecedented and unremitting pressures during 2020/21.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications in respect of this paper

Workforce Implications

There are no workforce implications in respect of this paper

Risk Assessment

Any relevant Strategic Risks are highlighted with the Strategic Risk Register reviewed and updated on a quarterly basis.

Relevance to Strategic Priorities

As one of 14 territorial NHS Boards, NHS Forth Valley is accountable to Scottish Ministers supported by the Scottish Government Health and Social Care Directorates. NHS Forth Valley is responsible for the protection and the improvement of the population's health and for the delivery of frontline healthcare services.

Equality Declaration

The author can confirm that due regard has been given to the Equality Act 2010 and compliance with the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of the decision making process.

Further to an evaluation it is noted that:

- Paper is not relevant to Equality and Diversity

Consultation Process

For wider circulation and for publication on the NHS Forth Valley website.



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Ms Janie McCusker
Chair
NHS Forth Valley

Via email: janie.mccusker@nhs.scot

11 January 2021

Dear Janie,

NHS FORTH VALLEY: 2019/20 ANNUAL REVIEW

1. Thank you for attending NHS Forth Valley's Annual Review with your Chief Executive on 11 December via video conference. I note that this is your first formal Board Review, and having been appointed in March I recognise this must have been difficult given this has been the most challenging of years. Your Annual Review was Chaired by the former Minister for Public Health, Sport & Wellbeing Mr FitzPatrick, therefore while I did not Chair your Annual Review, I am writing to summarise the key discussion points.

2. As you will be aware, the intention was for Ministers to conduct a full round of Annual Reviews during the summer. Whilst that has not proved possible due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Annual Reviews remain an important part of the accountability process for the NHS and, as such, we have arranged for Ministers to hold appropriate sessions with the Chair and Chief Executive of each Board via video conference. Mr FitzPatrick was supported in the meeting by Christine McLaughlin, Director of Planning.

3. The agenda for this year's round of Reviews has been split into three sections to cover: pre-Covid performance during 2019/20; the initial response to the pandemic from February/March to July 2020; and a forward look, in line with the current Board mobilisation plans (August to end of March 2021) and beyond.

Pre-Covid performance during 2019/20

4. In terms of outpatient waiting times performance, I note significant improvements were achieved during Quarter 4 of 2019/20 and 74.3% of outpatients were seen at quarter end March 2019. Investment in Advanced Practice Physiotherapists (APP) helped manage GP Musco-Skeletal workload in 28 GP practices and reduce onward referral to secondary Orthopaedic services.

5. On inpatient and day case performance the Board delivered on its AOP trajectory for the first half of 2019/20; with issues emerging as winter pressures and demand for unscheduled care increased. Key issues affecting performance include workforce

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vacancies in a number of specialties, including rheumatology, respiratory and anaesthesia; and performance was impacted by limited additional capacity in the independent sector. Radiology performance was very good at the end of March 2020 at 90.9%, (724 waiting over 6 weeks). However, this deteriorated as COVID-19 restrictions came into effect and appointments were cancelled. It was also noted that while NHS Forth Valley had previously been an outlier in national hip fracture audit, it is welcome that is no longer the case for any of the standards.

5. Turning to unscheduled care performance, NHS Forth Valley was escalated to level 3 on the framework for poor A&E standard performance in November 2018; then de-escalated to level 2 in early summer 2019 due to progress made with the Getting Forth Right local recovery plan. Nonetheless, pre-COVID-19 performance during the winter of 2019/20 was consistently below the target of 95%.

6. In terms of cancer waiting times over the last five quarters, I am pleased to note that NHS Forth Valley met the 31 day standard in all five quarters, however the Board did not meet the 62 day standard. The Board has assured Scottish Government officials that you are actively addressing challenges to improve performance and that you are working collaboratively across services and Board boundaries.

7. On mental health waiting times, NHS Forth Valley is one of the Boards that has been prioritised for enhanced improvement support, as referenced in the Mental Health Transition and Recovery Plan. For the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) standard in the quarter ending 31 March, 54.2% of local patients had been seen within 18 weeks, against the 90% standard. On Psychological Therapies, performance against the Board's AOP trajectory has been varied and for the quarter ending 31 March 60.6% patients were seen within 18 weeks; although there had been a recovery to 93.3% in the most recent quarter, ending 30 September 2020. However, the Board still has a large number of people waiting for treatment who have already breached the standard. We are keen to see improvements in this area and welcome your commitment to improving performance, working with Scottish Government colleagues.

8. Finally on 2019/20 performance, I welcome that NHS Forth Valley met its financial targets by the year-end.

Initial response to the pandemic from February/March to July 2020

8. You provided a helpful overview of the Board's initial response to the pandemic from late February. This required an unparalleled, immediate and radical restructure of both services and ways of working in the NHS in Scotland, including in NHS Forth Valley. The Board's response involved working closely with the local Health & Social Care Partnerships, local councils and public sector colleagues, and the use of digital technology was increased rapidly to deliver care across NHS Forth Valley. I understand that the Board were supporting Care Homes from the outset, and that NHS Forth Valley was one of the first NHS Boards to establish dedicated mobile testing teams to test care home residents and staff so that appropriate infection control and isolation measures could quickly be put in place for anyone with positive test results.

9. All Boards will need to learn from the pandemic experience and adapt; ensuring that the remarkable innovation and new ways of working demonstrated this year underpin the local strategy for a sustainable future. We also asked the local Area Clinical Forum and Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

Area Partnership Forum to provide brief updates ahead of the Review and I would like to take this opportunity to, once again, formally record our sincere thanks to local staff for the incredible effort and unstinting commitment they have consistently shown, in the most testing of conditions. On staff wellbeing, you set out that a number of initiatives had been developed and put in place to support staff wellbeing. I welcome your assurance that this remains a high priority for the Board: this must be maintained as an already fatigued workforce is faced with a very challenging winter.

Forward Look

10. The Board's priority areas moving forward include: Test and Protect Programme; Flu and COVID-19 Vaccination Programme; and Remobilisation of Elective Care.

11. In terms of the coming weeks and months, our over-riding priority remains, as in the first phase of the pandemic, that the NHS is not overwhelmed. We therefore welcomed your assurances about robust winter planning and local resilience.

12. All Health Boards had seen unscheduled care pressures fall in the first phase of the pandemic, with the restrictions having a significant impact on attendances. However, as restrictions were scaled down following the initial lockdown, attendances have risen; and Boards face new pressures in A&E Departments and receiving wards due to the appropriate infection control measures and streaming of patients. That is why we recently piloted the redesign of urgent care in NHS Ayrshire & Arran. I understand that NHS Forth Valley is supportive of this necessary redesign work and in line with the national approach, plans are in development for flow centre and scheduling unscheduled care.

13. Following the initial improvement seen in A&E performance, over the last few months the Board has become challenged in terms of meeting the 4 hour access standard. Attendance at A&E and across the whole system has increased significantly. Capacity has been challenged due to high acuity of patients and high pattern of resuscitation activity. This is further compounded by pressures of increasing numbers of Covid patients requiring single rooms and the reduction in the overall bed capacity as a result of Covid.

14. We want to recognise the achievement locally with the seasonal flu vaccination programme. A robust communications strategy will be crucial, for the benefit of all stakeholders, on our approach to the very significant logistical and other challenges associated with the vaccination programme for COVID-19.

15. In terms of effective integration, I was pleased to learn that whole system working has been very much the focus of the approach during the pandemic. It is important that this is maintained and developed as the Board and its planning partners move from the emergency/winter response to operational recovery and, ultimately, renewal.

Finance

16. On financial outturn for 2020/21, as at month 6, NHS Forth Valley is forecasting financial balance at year end, based on the assumption that all COVID-19 costs will be covered in full. Scottish Government's finance colleagues will keep in close contact about planning assumptions for 2021/22.

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Conclusion

17. We want to reiterate our thanks to the Board and local staff for their ongoing, incredible efforts, professionalism and commitment, in the facing of unprecedented and unremitting pressures during 2020/21.

18. We know you understand that there is no room for complacency, given the myriad of risks the NHS faces this winter. We will continue to keep local activity under close review and to provide as much support as possible. We are nonetheless confident that NHS Forth Valley and its staff are well placed to continue to deliver for the benefit of local people.

Kind regards,



JEANE FREEMAN

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