

## **Brief for Development Advisory Group – Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> January, 2022**

### **ICS development – new target date 1 July 2022**

The Health and Care Bill, which intends to put Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) on a statutory footing and create Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), is currently being considered by Parliament.

To allow sufficient time for the remaining parliamentary stages, a new target date of 1 July 2022 has been agreed for new statutory arrangements to take effect and Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) to be legally and operationally established. This replaces the previous target date of 1 April 2022.

This new target date will provide some extra flexibility to prepare for the new statutory arrangements and manage the immediate priorities in the pandemic response, while maintaining our momentum towards more effective system working.

Together with our CCGs, we are continuing to prepare for the closure of CCGs and the establishment of NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board, working towards the new target date.

Please be assured that this short delay does not affect our priorities and what we are currently doing to achieve a smooth transition of staff and functions. We will continue to focus on the immediate demands of Covid, the ambitious booster programme and the operational issues that ensue. Our work towards organisational redesign will continue at pace. If anything, the extra time will allow for better engagement with our partners, our communities and, of course, our staff.

### **Key questions**

#### **What happens between 1 April and 1 July 2022?**

The first quarter of 2022/23 will now be an extension of the preparatory period.

During this period:

- CCGs will remain in place as statutory organisations. They will retain all existing duties and functions and will conduct their business (collaboratively where appropriate), through existing governing bodies.
- Our CCG leaders will work with designate ICB leaders on key decisions which will affect the future ICB, notably commissioning and contracting.



- NHS England and Improvement will retain all direct commissioning responsibilities not already delegated to CCGs.

### **Will this slow progress on integration, which has accelerated during the pandemic?**

Joint working arrangements have been in place at system level for some time, and there has already been significant progress in preparing for the proposed establishment of the statutory Integrated Care System, including recruitment of Graham Urwin as our ICB Designate Chief Executive.

Designate ICB leaders will continue to develop system level plans for 2022/23 and prepare for the formal establishment of ICBs in line with the guidance previously set out by NHS England and Improvement and this updated timeline.

### **What does the timing mean for establishing Integrated Care Partnerships?**

The Department of Health and Social Care's (DHSC) guidance on establishing ICPs sets an expectation that all systems will have at least an interim ICP up and running at the point when the statutory arrangements come into effect and ICBs are formed. Local authority and designate ICB leaders will continue to work together to develop Cheshire and Merseyside ICP arrangements in line with the DHSC guidance, working to the revised target implementation date of 1 July 2022.

### **Is this going ahead without the legislation?**

The establishment of statutory ICS arrangements is subject to the passage of the Health and Care Bill, which is currently being considered by Parliament. Some preparatory steps are necessary to enable the new arrangements to come into effect at the point of establishment if legislation is passed. This preparatory phase will now be extended to reflect the new target date.

### **Could the implementation date change?**

The establishment of statutory Integrated Care Systems is subject to the passage of the Health and Care Bill. Working towards a target date of 1 July 2022 is intended to give systems a clear timescale for preparations and many positive steps have already been taken to prepare for the establishment of Integrated Care Boards if and when the Bill is enacted.

### **For more information**

Visit: [www.cheshireandmerseysidepartnership.co.uk/ics-development](http://www.cheshireandmerseysidepartnership.co.uk/ics-development)



## Recruitment to senior roles

The recruitment processes are well underway for key leadership roles, non-executive directors and the Designate Chair. We will soon be in a position to confirm the appointment of our Medical Director, Associate Medical Director and Finance Director. Other senior roles are currently being advertised and we will soon begin appointing to the positions of our nine place leads.

We will keep you informed of progress and confirm appointments as they are made.

The delay to the target date provides an opportunity for us to refine our thinking on staffing structures at Place. We had planned to engage with staff on this around 14<sup>th</sup> January, but this will be delayed slightly and will start later this month. The slight delay reflects the fact that whilst we want to make sure we get this right, we do not wish to lose momentum and are keen to provide staff with the information they need, as soon as is practicable.

## Covid-19 Update

Here is a reminder of the current restrictions in place, which are to remain until 28<sup>th</sup> January.

- Face covering compulsory in most public indoor venues, other than hospitality
- NHS Covid Pass mandatory in specific settings, using a negative test or full vaccination via the NHS Covid Pass
- People asked to work from home if they can
- Vaccines and testing remain our best lines of defence

Boris Johnson said in his briefing on Tuesday this week that he hopes England can "ride out" the current wave of Covid-19 without further restrictions, but he acknowledged parts of the NHS would feel "temporarily overwhelmed" amid a surge of Omicron cases. The weeks ahead would be challenging and some services may be disrupted by staff absences. Sickness absence in Cheshire and Merseyside is currently at around 10% but this does not reflect bank and agency staff who are also affected and their availability is reduced, adding to the pressure.

He said the health service was moving on to a "war footing" with plans to set up coronavirus surge hubs at hospitals across England in preparation for a potential wave of admissions.

Covid admissions in C&M are currently at around 100 per day and critical care availability is ok. However, hospital occupancy rates are at around 95% so safe discharge remains a key priority. The system is taking a balanced, pragmatic approach with situation under continuous review. The community, mental health and social care sectors are also greatly pressured and virtual wards and respiratory wards are being stepped up.



To reflect the Level 4 Incident status of Covid, the hospital and out-of-hospital cell structure has been stepped up with daily meetings to monitor the situation.

### **Vaccination and Boosters**

Latest figures show that 71.3% of the Cheshire and Merseyside population have received at least one vaccine, with 75.7% of the eligible population having had a booster. As expected, demand for the vaccine and boosters significantly reduced over the Christmas period and it is important we continue to urge everyone who is eligible to get their jab. There is sufficient capacity in the system and we need to increase take up. Vaccination remains the best line of defence against Covid. Concerted communications efforts continue but we appreciate all help in getting these key messages out.

- Everybody should be vaccinated to protect themselves and their loved ones.
- Vaccination not only reduces the chances of infection, it reduces severity and transmissibility.
- Full vaccination status affects accessibility to many events, venues and travel opportunities.
- And it's never too late – even if people have so far declined the opportunity to be vaccinated, they will be welcome in vaccination centres and staff will be only too happy to administer first, second or third doses.

### **Confirmatory PCR tests to be temporarily suspended for positive lateral flow test results**

From 11th January in England, people who receive positive lateral flow results for COVID-19 will be required to self-isolate immediately and won't be required to take a confirmatory PCR test. This is a temporary measure while COVID-19 rates remain high across the UK. Whilst levels of COVID-19 are high, the vast majority of people with positive LFD results can be confident that they have COVID-19.

This move frees up capacity in PCR testing, increasing speedy access to those who need it most, like front line health and care staff and other essential workers.

Under this new approach, anyone who receives a positive lateral flow device (LFD) test result should report their result on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) and must self-isolate immediately but will not need to take a follow-up PCR test. After reporting a positive LFD test result, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace so that their contacts can be traced and must continue to self-isolate.