

Media Release

27 February 2015

Health and social care partners collaborate to tackle high demand for hospital services

Partners across the local health and care system are working closely together to manage the current high demand for services at local hospitals.

Hospitals in the region have seen an increase in attendance to the Emergency Department coupled by a recent outbreak of norovirus in the community which has resulted in a number of ward closures.

The RUH, along with partners across the local health and social care system including Bath and North East Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Bath & North East Somerset Council, Sirona Care & Health, Wiltshire CCG, Wiltshire Council and South West Ambulance Service met this week (26.02.15) as part of their programme of regular meetings to oversee how the system is operating and to focus on managing the increased pressure on services as effectively as possible.

Francesca Thompson, Chief Operating Officer at the RUH said:

“We have been incredibly busy for a number of weeks and our emergency department remains under pressure with high numbers of admissions and a norovirus outbreak affecting bed availability. We are working hard to improve the flow of patients through the hospital and, as always, internal processes are in place to help us manage demand effectively.

“In line with hospitals up and down the country, we are continuing to see a high number of poorly people that need care, which is why we would urge people to only attend A&E if it is a serious life threatening emergency.

“We would like to thank the community for their help during our extended visiting restrictions which are currently in place and to ask that if you have had diarrhoea or vomiting please do not visit the hospital until you have been clear of symptoms for 48 hours.”

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Dr Ian Orpen, a local GP and Clinical Chair of BaNES CCG said:

“The CCG has plans and processes in place to ensure that all health and care providers are working together to manage the pressure on hospital services so we can continue to provide safe care and treatment to all our patients.

“The message to the public is still don't go to A&E unless you think you have a very serious or life-threatening condition. In many cases people can receive the right treatment much more quickly from a local pharmacy, making an appointment with their GP or by calling NHS 111.”

ENDS

Notes to editors:

1. Hospitals use different levels of escalation in order to:
 - Identify and manage capacity proactively
 - Create a clear plan of action and management relevant to the level of demand
2. This internal policy is designed to mitigate the risk of further escalation and ensures an appropriate response from key staff members to contribute to a reduction in escalation status. The policy aims to maintain high standards of patient safety, patient experience and performance against key waiting time and quality standards of care.
3. Bath and North East Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group (BaNES CCG) is responsible for planning, commissioning (buying) and monitoring local health services for the population of Bath and North East Somerset. The CCG is led by local GPs, from all 27 practices in BaNES, who have first-hand experience of what their patients need and understand first-hand how the NHS works.
4. The CCG works closely with local partners including B&NES Council, local NHS providers, patients and the public to manage existing NHS services and implement new services to ensure that high quality health and social care is delivered to the population as close to their home as possible.