

## King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust submission to the Southwark Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission, July 2021.

King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust is one of the busiest and biggest Trusts in the country serving an inner-city population of 1.3 million people and acting as a tertiary referral centre for millions more.

This submission below sets out how the Trust, and in particular our Denmark Hill site - which cares for the people of Southwark - has supported our staff and patients during COVID-19, and the steps we are taking as part of our recovery from the pandemic.

### COVID-19

#### *Summary of COVID-19 situation*

We have treated more than 7,400 patients with COVID-19 since the pandemic began.<sup>i</sup> This puts King's in the top 10% of all NHS Trusts in England and Wales for primary COVID-19 admissions. Throughout the pandemic, our staff have shown outstanding professionalism and agility to meet and overcome challenges, and they continue to provide high quality care to all. We are also grateful to the support we have received from partner organisations and external stakeholders.

Our site at Denmark Hill is particularly challenged at present. On 23 July 2021 we marked day 500 in our operational response to the pandemic. Despite periods of fewer unwell patients with COVID-19, King's College Hospital has not yet reached below 25 COVID-19 inpatients, and we are expecting to continue to have significant numbers of patients for the foreseeable future.

Our current Trust position is:

- As at Friday 16 July 2021:
  - Trust-wide: 39 admissions and 29 discharges across the last seven days.
  - For Denmark Hill site: 26 admissions and 14 discharges across the last seven days.
- As at Friday 23 July 2021:
  - Trust wide: 64 COVID-19 positive patients.
  - For Denmark Hill site: 47 COVID-19 positive patients, of which 36 people are in general and acute beds and 11 people are in critical care beds.

Currently we have nearly 400 staff – out of 14,000 Trust wide - being supported with varying symptoms associated with Long Covid. Our occupational health service has been running a pilot support programme for our staff affected. Over the summer period we'll be gathering feedback to understand how we can ensure that the support we provide is effective and beneficial to our staff.

#### *Third wave preparation*

We are beginning to see an increase in COVID-19 admissions, and we anticipate that this may be the start of a third wave of hospitalisations as case numbers rise nationally. Our early data suggests that currently, the delta variant is generally affecting younger people, who are in hospital for shorter periods of time, and are less likely to require admission to critical care.

We are seeing some patients who have received both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, however, most of those presenting with serious illness have not been fully vaccinated. King's is ready to respond appropriately should we see another surge in critically unwell people. We are also committed to continuing with as much non-COVID activity as we can through the third wave, recognising the significant distress caused to patients with less urgent conditions whose treatment has been disrupted since the pandemic began.

After 19 July 2021, patients, visitors and staff are still required to wear masks and observe social distancing when visiting our hospitals. This is in line with national NHS guidance for health care settings. We've yet to fully see how the impact of the lifting of restrictions has impacted COVID-19 hospitalisations and mortality rates.

Attendances to the emergency department at Denmark Hill are currently exceeding pre-pandemic levels. We're working quickly and effectively to better manage the needs of people arriving at the emergency department, and to ensure the best use of existing staff and space – but demand currently shows no sign of slowing down, despite it being summer.

### **Elective care recovery**

While some elective care was paused during previous waves, we are now carrying out planned elective care at all our sites.

Our focus is on progressing with our elective care recovery programme while also making sure we are ready and able to treat and admit increased numbers of COVID-19 positive patients if necessary. We are reviewing the situation and how we manage these dual priorities on a daily basis.

Like all Trusts, we have made some minor safety adjustments for people coming in for planned treatment whereby we are requiring that they test negative for COVID-19 and then self-isolate for at least three days prior to their day or inpatient procedures. The number of days isolation required extends for inpatient care depending on the clinical vulnerability of the people on the ward. We are already making good progress with reducing the waiting list for elective care and will continue to ensure elective recovery is prioritised.

### **Cancer care and treatment**

There was some disruption to cancer care throughout wave one and wave two of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our cancer team have recorded and reviewed weekly a tracker for every patient whose diagnostic pathway or treatment was put on hold to ensure we have clinical oversight of the care backlog.

Clinical priority national guidance was followed, and patients were kept informed. While many of our Clinical Cancer Specialist (CNS) workforce were redeployed during wave one, we learnt that the impact this had on patients was significant, and as such, we are doing everything we can to ensure these staff always remain in their substantive posts.

To support our clinically extremely vulnerable patients throughout the pandemic, there were a number of actions that we proactively took. These included:

- All treatments that could be offered safely continued, and most cancer surgeries were transferred to private or other NHS providers to avoid delay. King's also set up a bespoke helpline for people with cancer during COVID-19.
- Weekly meetings with the South East London Cancer Alliance took place to ensure we shared resources across organisations and prioritised the most urgent patients.
- Support services - including radiology, pathology and endoscopy - are now prioritising cases delayed or postponed based on clinical need.

Furthermore, we have conducted a survey with our patients to understand their experiences of cancer care during COVID-19. Of the 50 responses garnered, we learnt that most patients had experienced disruption rather than cancelled care. Throughout the responses, communication and assurance for the future were key themes. Understandably, patients want to know that in future COVID-19 waves, their treatment will be able to safely continue.

Over the past 15 months we have made significant improvements for people with or affected by cancer who are using King's services. These improvements include:

- 100% of patients starting new cycles of chemotherapy are offered pre-chemotherapy consultations with high satisfaction response rates.

- The cancer patient involvement group was set up in March 2020 and successfully embedded during 2020-21. Patients participate in the development of patient information and also help in an advisory capacity with projects, surveys and service design so that we can ensure the care we provide is patient centred. There are two patient representatives who sit on the Trust Cancer Board to directly feedback and support co-production.
- We are providing continuing professional development for our cancer CNS workforce. We have also supported staff with training in breaking bad news virtually.

It is recognised that there is more to do, but it is reassuring to see that our improvements for people needing cancer care are making the experience better for our patients. We have recommitted to ensuring that cancer care remains a key priority for King's and have set out an action plan in this year's quality account.

## **Maternity care**

Throughout the pandemic, our maternity staff and services have been following national directives, and our antenatal care is continuing in line with the NICE guidance. There is now a mixture of face to face and telephone appointments available, and women are cared for in the most appropriate way for their clinical needs. We are working to scale back up to full face to face appointments as soon as is safely possible. All expectant parents are encouraged to use the national booking process to book a COVID-19 vaccine, and they are supported by our clinical teams in making the best decision for them.

As soon as the national guidance allowed, we supported one person to accompany the birthing person at antenatal appointments and during the birth and aftercare. While this is limited at the moment to one support person, they are able to have access to the ward 24/7. To ensure that we are protecting everyone, patients and their support person are asked to complete a lateral flow test if feasibly possible before they come into hospital.

## **Additional Information**

### **COVID-19 vaccination programme**

We are proud to host a mass vaccination centre which supports our local community, including the people of Southwark, to receive protection against COVID-19. This follows King's being one of the first NHS hospitals to begin vaccinating healthcare staff in December 2020.

The mass vaccination centre is situated at the Western Education Centre on our Denmark Hill site and opened on Wednesday 19 May 2021. Since it opened, we have provided 36,630 COVID-19 vaccinations to members of the public. The centre is giving the Pfizer vaccine to people who book appointments through the national booking system, and a small number of second dose Astra Zeneca vaccinations to our staff. There have been no demand issues; everyone who has booked an appointment has received a vaccine and we have a less than 10% did not attend rate which is very positive.

The mass vaccination centre has received extremely positive community feedback with 99% of people reporting the service as very good or good. This is a phenomenal accolade to the staff who have worked tirelessly to support our local community. We have also had high profile support including a visit from the UK government vaccines minister and our local MPs. King's continues to work closely with our partners locally and Our Healthier South East London integrated care system (ICS) to ensure that we support the people of Lambeth and Southwark to get vaccinated.

Across our staff group, we have reached 80% of fully vaccinated staff. We're continuing to offer all staff one to one conversations with their line managers to allay any concerns that they may have about COVID-19 vaccination and to boost confidence.

## **New Trust strategy**

This month, we've launched our new five-year, patient-centred, clinically-led strategy for King's, *Strong Roots, Global Reach*<sup>ii</sup>. This is important milestone for the Trust and as our communities

begin to recover from COVID-19, we feel that now is the right time to be determining our priorities for the future.

The strategy commits King's to being **BOLD**:

- **Brilliant People**
- **Outstanding Care**
- **Leaders in Research, Innovation and Education**
- **Diversity, Equality and Inclusion is at the heart of everything we do.**

We're committing to working even more collaboratively with our partners and local communities which will be ever more important now that the legislation to confirm the ICS frameworks is before Parliament.

The strategy was launched after extensive engagement with staff, the public/patients and our partners. Since the beginning of the year, more than 4,500 people have contributed to the development of our strategy – from inside and outside our organisation. We received more than 100 responses to our public survey, and we facilitated workshops with more than 25 other organisations as well as patient groups, including older people and people with learning disabilities, to hear their views.

### **Programme of transformation**

#### *Modernising Medicine*

Over the next 18 months, the Trust is investing in the Denmark Hill site to deliver transformation projects which will improve patient care, experience and outcomes across emergency care and outpatient services.

We are: creating a new acute medical unit; constructing a new building to house some outpatient services; and relocating a proportion of therapy services to a new site near to Loughborough Junction station. This will be coupled with significant staffing investment to ensure our changes are safe and sustainable.

A wide cohort of our patients, visitors and staff will benefit from the refurbished clinic spaces – both on site and at Coldharbour Works - which are being purpose built in order to accommodate the necessary changes to urgent care.

We will be engaging with patients, service users and our local community to help us ensure that their needs are at the heart of these improvements. We have completed an equality impact assessment to highlight any unintended consequences for service users, and to help us to put in place meaningful mitigations.

The new acute medical unit will encourage better collaboration between health care teams and improve safety, experience and outcomes for patients. King's is committed to continuous improvement and these projects will also help the Trust achieve the objectives set out in the NHS Long Term Plan.

*For more information, please contact:* Rachael Truswell, Head of Stakeholder Relations, on [Rachael.Truswell@nhs.net](mailto:Rachael.Truswell@nhs.net).

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<sup>i</sup> King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Quality Account 2020-2021. Published July 2021. Accessible here: [corp - 678.1 - kch quality report 20-21.pdf](#)

<sup>ii</sup> King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, *Strong Roots, Global Reach; five year strategy for King's 2021-26*. Published July 2021. Accessible here: <https://www.kch.nhs.uk/about/our-strategy>