

Report for O&S committee at CDC on GCC HOSC meeting 28th November 2023.

The main discussion today was focussed on primary care services. There has been an increase in GP appointments which in Sept 2023 were 27% higher than in December 2019. The reason for this is being investigated. At the same time, the number of GPs in the county has fallen by about 2%. Waiting times for appointments can still be several weeks but all practices offer same day emergency appointments.

Dental provision was discussed. A programme of supervised tooth brushing is being taken to schools as some children are never taken to see a dentist. Access to NHS dentists remains a problem but there will be an investment in out of hours emergency NHS dental provision.

Pharmacists are being asked to offer more consultations to give advice to patients who could self medicate. There are 103 community pharmacies in Gloucestershire as well as private businesses which could offer this service. There is a national plan to recruit more pharmacists. New pharmacies need to be built where there are large new housing developments.

I raised the issue of GPs working inadequate surgeries which will affect the ability of those practices to recruit. The integrated care board are aware of this. Under section 106 agreements associated with developments, money is often requested to support GPs but not pharmacists.

Recruitment difficulties to all NHS & social care posts was discussed, the lack of affordable housing was raised as a major issue. The NHS relies heavily on international staff recruitment. Since Brexit, this is largely from outside the EU. These staff need help with housing & also pastoral care.

The recent industrial action has had an impact on targets. For the first time in many months, GHFT missed two of the cancer waiting times targets. This was mostly in two areas, colorectal & urology.

Our agenda also included reports mental health & maternity services but these were not discussed in depth at this meeting. There is ongoing building work at the Cheltenham birthing unit.

The medical day unit which was moved to Cheltenham during lockdown will remain there for the time being