



18<sup>th</sup> November 2020

To: Councillor B. Muir  
Surrey County Council  
County Hall  
Penrhyn Road  
Kingston upon Thames  
KE1 2DN

Dear Councillor Muir

## **RE: Mental Health Task Group Report**

Thank you for sharing the Mental Health Task Group report and to Ben Cullimore for helpfully summarising the key recommendations for general practice for which you requested a reply. We are sighted on the fuller response from Heartlands and support their comments. Mental Health and wellbeing are strategic priorities for the Frimley Health and Care Integrated Care System (ICS) and the local areas of Surrey Heath and Farnham. We recognise the importance of continued investment and transformation to deliver better integrated care to improve outcomes for our population.

Increasingly it is the general practice team that is supporting individuals with mental health and wellbeing needs and our response applies to the wider general practice team not just GPs. Improving the mental health service experience for people requires an integrated system response with multi-agency working and many of the recommendations touch other service providers as well as general practice. We are very fortunate to have strong system relationships on which to build.

Our response to the issues raised is detailed below:

### 1. Telling Our Story Once

We recognise the frustrations experienced by the witnesses with whom you spoke and acknowledge there is more we need to do, together, to prevent people having to unnecessarily repeat their story. We are hoping that the further developments to the Shared Care Record being rolled out across Surrey will result in improvements shortly and will support general practice to ensure all relevant information is shared from and to general practice. We will also make sure that the process on how patients can access their medical record is clearly communicated in general practice.

### 2. Training including communication (instructions and terminology)



It is important that all GPs are confident in supporting people with mental health issues as national surveys have highlighted that 30% of GP consultations contain a mental health component and this has been rising during the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of our ongoing education sessions we will feedback the concerns raised and ensure mental health, learning disabilities and autism continues to form a core part of our conversations with practices through these events. We have found that the embedding of mental health practitioners as part of the GPIMHS model (known as the MHICS model in the Frimley System) and the support from SABP to advice and training through this physical presence in practices has been hugely beneficial as one route for advice and development and look forward to this being rolled out across all practices.

### 3. Awareness of resources available

Signposting to support services is another area where the GPIMHS model is also proving to have benefits as it enables general practice to articulate the needs of individuals and others (who have greater knowledge and a smaller scope of practice) to ensure these needs are met by the most appropriate service, be it statutory or third sector. We are aware of what valuable resources the Surrey Information Point and Healthy Surrey are and we will ensure that those who are best placed to use these resources are trained to make best use of them.

### 4. PCNs

We already have mental health champions in the two Surrey facing PCN localities (Surrey Heath and Farnham).

### 5. Communication between GP and Consultant

We will explore with SABP the best way to improve the two way communication between GP and Consultant. The GPIMHS model and integrating older person's mental health services into our Integrated Hubs have already improved these lines of communication over recent years but we are always looking for means of supporting each other to support getting the right care to people in a timely way. General practice is already able to access advice and guidance from SBP through the SPA (single point of access).

### 6. Relationships with third sector organisations

Third sector partners are now an integral part of the care model for mental health (Community Connections) and regular meetings take place (more than annually) with third sector partners in Surrey Heath and Farnham. However, we will have further conversations with them on how we can strengthen partnership working across the system, including CCGs. Local working within integrated care teams ensures that the mental and physical needs of individuals are considered and our third sector partners are core to this "whole person" approach. Our ICS governance structure includes third sector representation, and they are core partners in the delivery of our Safe Havens, Recovery College and GPIMHS (MHICS).



## 7. Remote working and digital solutions

One of the benefits of the pandemic has been the acceleration of digital options within general practice and positive feedback has been received around access improvement. We are sensitive that remote working does not work for everyone and there will be times when the best option is a face to face consultation. However, where appropriate the new options implemented during COVID-19 will be embedded as a core part of the general practice offer.

## 8. Appropriate communication (see 2)

## 9. GPIMHS

We are, and will continue to work with, system partners (including SAPB) and NHSE to accelerate the roll out of this programme and are currently in the process of bidding with partners for national funding to extend its scope.

Yours sincerely

Handwritten signature of Dr Andy Brooks.

**Dr Andy Brooks**  
**Clinical Chief Officer**  
**Frimley Collaborative**

Handwritten signature of Fiona Edwards.

**Fiona Edwards**  
**Chief Executive**  
**Surrey & Borders Partnership NHS Trust**  
**& Lead for Frimley Integrated Care System**

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