

Vaccination - primary care leads the way

Suffolk practices, via Primary Care Networks, have delivered an amazing job on the vaccination programme. Overall, Suffolk ranks as the highest county in England with the vast majority of vaccinations delivered by PCNs. Saxmundham, Leiston and Felixstowe are among the most vaccinated populations and Woolpit's innovative drive-through model has been mentioned in the national press.

The Fed's contribution is 91,000 from five sites. Going forward, Trinity Park, Debenham, Haverhill and Stowmarket will complete second doses on about 17 June and then close. First doses for those under the age of 50 will be undertaken mostly by PCN sites supported by NHSE sites and pharmacies.

Woodbridge too will give second doses but will also be open for first doses for the under 50s from surrounding practices. The site will remain open until September.



Pictured are the last patient receiving their first dose at Trinity Park; James Pawsey outside a pop-up clinic at the Hawthorn Drive Surgery, Ipswich; and Dr Ayesha Tu Zahra next to the COVID-19 vaccination bus that is touring east Suffolk.

Thank you to our primary care mental health team

The Fed has been part of a long-running collaborative effort to plan the transformation of our mental health services. The implementation programme is being led by an alliance of ESNEFT, WSFT, NSFT and the Fed.

Primary care will be able to have more support with the recruitment of PCN Mental Health Practitioners. Their work will use the learning from the Fed's Primary Care Mental Health Team, which operates in parts of Felixstowe, Haverhill and Ipswich. NHS England now says these practitioners have to be employed by NSFT so the Fed's mental health nurses will transfer on 1 May.

The team has been with the Fed since 2019 and have brought an amazing 'can do' attitude, drive and innovation. Many thanks to the team for all you have done.

Fed East community ultrasound

After an 80% drop in referrals in April last year, activity has picked up steadily and is nearly back to pre-COVID levels. Infection control means each scan takes longer. Despite this, the team has reduced the backlog from a record high of 1,058 in May last year to just 69 last month.

The service is well placed to manage the increase in activity we expect post- lockdown. The team continues to achieve the target waiting times of two weeks for urgent referrals and six for routine.

We are currently scanning from Riverside, Bildeston, Wickham Market, Stowhealth, Walton and Framfield. Over the next few months we will restart in Eye, Hadleigh and Aldeburgh.

Podiatry backlog is cleared

We are really pleased to report that the backlog from last spring has now been cleared. The average waiting time peaked at nearly 11 weeks in May but was down to 3.8 weeks last month thanks to a real team effort.

Fed 2019/20 accounts

During the 2019/20 financial year our revenue grew by 21% to £22.7m but this came at the expense of a sharp increase in our operating deficit, which rose from £23,354 to £399,711.

During 2020 the Walton GP practice was closed and Kirkley Mill transferred to a local GP partnership but only after the CQC awarded it a 'Good' rating (it was 'Inadequate' when the Fed took it on). We also rationalised our support teams.

The Fed's finances are now back on track. In the ten months to January 2021, we generated a surplus and have repaired our balance sheet.

News from GP Support Hub



- The Hub has been helping with recruiting GPs and nurses for the Suffolk COVID-19 vaccination programme.
- The Hub is now back up and running for its primary purpose of helping GPs to obtain confidential information, advice and support on career, personal development and wellbeing. Please contact the Hub via email info@thegphub.org
- The Bring a Baby event on 23 February was attended by 23 GPs. It also focused on remote consultations and perinatal safeguarding. We plan to run more events so if you are interested or know someone who might be, please contact us.

- Are you looking for something different? Simon Rudland, the Fed Chair, combines his time in Suffolk and on Hoy, an island in Orkney. On the island he works 24/7 in blocks of three weeks as the only doctor. A similar role is coming up. It's obviously a completely different challenge but if you are looking for a portfolio, it might suit you. If you are interested, please email the Hub.
- The First5 groups have continued to meet.

Contact Us

GP Support Hub
Email: info@thegphub.org
Telephone: 01473 350820
Social Media: @thegphub
 @gp_hub






Cervical screening service

A total of 411 screenings have taken place, of which 82% were from within the target age group of 25-49 year olds and 22% from ethnic minorities.

Phase two of the project will focus on education, targeting those who have never had a smear or a recent smear and the LGBT, ethnic minority and deprived communities.

LARC service

Public Health has asked us to run a six-month pilot to reduce the backlog of LARC fittings. It covers fitting for contraception, heavy menstrual bleeding and HRT and includes fitting and remove of IUDs, IUS and implants. We currently run this service from the Riverside Clinic, Ipswich, and Drovers House, Bury St Edmunds.

Practices should send their LARC waiting lists to catriona.mccallum@nhs.net with patient details. We aim is to see all patients within a month.

NHSE coaching offer

Coaching involves a coach helping an individual to address work-related issues over the course of several sessions. It can include 'offloading' what an individual is experiencing and being supported to develop practical strategies.

NHSE has a couple of free coaching initiatives:

1. For individuals working in primary care – www.england.nhs.uk/looking-after-you-too
2. For leaders and their immediate team – www.england.nhs.uk/looking-after-your-team

Want to know more about Physician Associates?

PAs are a relatively new part of the medical profession. They operate similarly to doctors, i.e. see patients, take a history, perform examinations and reach a diagnosis and a treatment plan. PAs cannot prescribe and have differing levels of competency.

PAs can be employed via PCNs. If you want to know more, Luke Selfe, who works at the Fed's Haverhill practice, is the Suffolk PA Ambassador (Luke.selfe@nhs.net).

