

Committee:	Health and Adult Social Services (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee
Meeting date:	June 2021
Title:	Update from University Hospitals Southampton NHS Foundation Trust (UHS) on COVID-19
Report From:	Duncan Linning-Karp, Deputy Chief Operating Officer

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an update to HASC on COVID-19 and the response of UHS.
- 1.2 To provide an update to HASC on the recovery of elective services after the second wave of COVID-19.

2. Current State

2.1 Since the last update to HASC in March 2021, cases of COVID-19 both locally and nationally have decreased significantly. However, this trend has now plateaued, with infections locally beginning to show a rise.

2.2 The new Delta variant is increasingly prevalent locally. While early indications suggest a reasonable level of efficacy after two doses of the vaccine, there remains a significant risk around the unvaccinated population and those who have had one dose. Weekly case rates have started to increase:



2.3 At the time of writing (15/06) UHS has 2 COVID positive patients in General and Acute beds and 1 in intensive care. This is a significant reduction from the mid-January peak of over 300 COVID positive patients. However, numbers are likely to start to trend upwards.

2.4 UHS has seen a significant increase in emergency department attendances and non-elective demand, seeing 103% of May 2019's demand in May 2021.

2.5 UHS continued to run a full elective programme. In May 2021 104% of May 2019's elective activity was carried out. This number is forecast to increase in further June and July.

2.6 UHS has detailed plans to scale up both Level 1 COVID positive beds and also ICU and HDU beds should there be a need. However, at a point this will begin to affect the elective programme.

2.7 Staff wellbeing remains a priority, with leave being encouraged and other support offered.

2.8 Two additional theatres are forecast to come on line at the end of June 2021.

2.9 Waiting lists remain above pre-pandemic levels, with 3,000 patients waiting over 52 weeks.

Conclusion

4.1 While COVID-19 demand is currently reduced, there remains a significant risk of a further wave. This is likely to be driven by the higher infectiousness of the Delta variant.

4.2 Robust plans are in place to manage a potential 3rd wave. However, at a point an expansion in critical care beds will necessitate a reduction in elective surgery.