

<b>Committee:</b>	Health and Adult Social Services (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee
<b>Meeting date:</b>	September 2021
<b>Title:</b>	Update from University Hospitals Southampton NHS Foundation Trust (UHS) on COVID-19
<b>Report From:</b>	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.

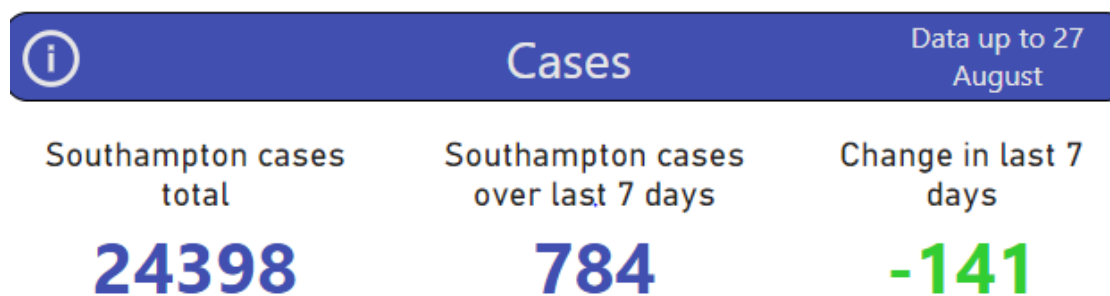
## 2.

## 3. Current State

2.1 Since the last update to HASC in June 2021, cases of COVID-19 both locally and nationally have increased significantly. This trend appears to have plateaued locally, although there is significant uncertainty about future, particularly as schools and universities return.

2.2 The new Delta variant is now the dominant variant both locally and nationally. While evidence suggests a high degree of effectiveness of the vaccine, and the majority of admissions had been in those unvaccinated, there have been breakthrough infections and double vaccinated patients have been admitted.

2.3 Weekly case rates are decreasing marginally:





## Weekly case rates

Data up to  
27 August

Southampton 7 day  
infection rate per 100k

**310.5**

Direction of travel ↓  
previous week

**Decrease**

South East 7 day  
infection rate per 100k

**285.6**

2.4 At the time of writing (02/09/21) UHS has 50 COVID-19 positive patients in General and Acute beds and 11 in intensive care. While this is a significant reduction from the mid-January peak of over 300 COVID-19 positive patients, it is a large increase from earlier in the summer when the numbers were in single figures. It is at a level where it has an affect on the elective surgical programme.

2.5 UHS has seen a significant increase in emergency department attendances and non-elective demand, seeing 111% of July 2019's emergency demand in July 2021 (the last month activity has been reported at the time of writing). This is unlikely to decrease.

2.6 Furthermore, the number of patients medically optimised for discharge and remaining in an acute bed continues to be unprecedentedly high, at around 150. There are particular delays for social care.

2.7 UHS continued to run a full elective programme, although in the month of August there have been some cancellations for critical care capacity.

2.8 UHS has detailed plans to scale up both Level 1 COVID-19 positive beds and also ICU and HDU beds should there be a need. However, it will affect the elective programme.

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

2.10 Two additional theatres are opening in early September 2021.

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

2.12 There is forecast to be a significantly higher than usual peak in respiratory syncytial virus in children in the autumn, plans are in place to manage this.

### Conclusion

3.1 There remains significant uncertainty about the likely trajectory for COVID-19 demand. There is also significant uncertainty over how severe the pressure for

other respiratory illnesses including influenza and respiratory syncytial virus in children and adults will be. However, it is likely to be a challenging winter, with significant excess non-elective demand.

3.2 Robust plans are in place to manage a potential further surge in COVID-19 infection, or other infections. However, at a point an expansion will affect the elective surgical programme.