

SHS/SFT Collaborative approach to Primary Care

Introduction

Symphony Healthcare Services (SHS) a subsidiary of Yeovil District Hospital and Somerset Foundation Trust (SFT) have supported the Primary Care provision in Somerset by managing General Medical Services (GMS) and Personal Medical Services (PMS) contracts since 2016.

They have collaborated closely over the past few years sharing primary care best practice. It was recognised during 2019 that the ambitions for an Integrated Care System (ICS) in Somerset would be strengthened by the development of one single model of NHS employed general practice within the county.

The rationale for this included the sharing of expertise with the desire to become a national exemplar in primary care provision, a closer strategic collaboration between Primary Care, Acute Trusts/Community services and the cost effectiveness of a single organisation.

Phased Approach

Phase 1:

- SHS would provide management support to the SFT practices through a sub-contract arrangement.
- This work commenced in Autumn 2020 with SHS using their primary care expertise to support the SFT practices. To further strengthen the governance arrangements around collaborative working it was agreed that an executive from SFT would be appointed as a voting member of the SHS Board.

Phase 2:

- SHS and SFT will collaborate to develop a single at scale primary care provider for Somerset. This will include engaging with staff, patients and key stakeholders to achieve successful implementation, supported by a clear legal framework.

Phase1 Achievements

- Positive recruitment and HR Support including 4 newly employed GPs
- Culture change and new communication routes for staff
- Financial and clinical governance due diligence complete
- Updated governance structure with routine meetings, monitoring of newly established KPIs and risk register review
- Operational review with ongoing leadership and support including
 - Establishing a workforce hub
 - Mandatory training/annual appraisals
 - QOF review
 - Establishing a meds management hub
 - Review of patient access/contact (telephony systems/text reminders)
 - Estates risk assessments

The Case for Phase 2

- Operational delivery from a focussed Primary Care Provider
- Standardised culture for primary care staff
- Financial efficiencies for both SHS and SFT
- Strategic value of a Primary Care provider with strong links to both foundation trusts including community services

Considerations

- Branding – Our preference for the SHS name to remain as it is now well established and will avoid patient confusion and increased costs. However it is recognised the new organisation's description needs to incorporate more of a Somerset feel
- Size – Covering approximately 20% of the Somerset Population it is recognised the independent Primary Care voice needs to be protected and the new organisation is used to promote whole system development, not to monopolise it
- Engagement – Due time and consideration for a full and thorough public and staff engagement process
- Financial Risk – Until the FT merger completes an interim arrangement will be required for SFT to support any financial risk of its four practices

Summary of Key Agreements

1. Aim for integration on 1st September 2021
2. The single model of NHS employed general practice will be Symphony Healthcare Services supported by branding that it is there to support across Somerset
3. Establish the financial mechanism for SFT to support the financial risk of the SFT practices until the FT merger is complete