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REPORT TO MORGANNWG LMC 14th July 2020

COVID 19

HUBS & FIELD HOSPITALS: Hubs have not been very useful. Footfall at the hubs has been very insignificant from the start. One cluster hub lasted only a few weeks. Some clusters have closed down the hubs with the ability to reactivate immediately. Two clusters have continued to operate the hubs, on referrals only basis (The numbers have been low with zero referrals on 2 out of 5 days). Some clusters did not have a hub from the beginning and Practices have been managing their own Covid patients as per standard operating procedures and infection control measures similar to the hubs'.

Swansea Bay University Health Board (SBUHB) has informed Morgannwg Local Medical Committee (MLMC) that field hospitals will be stepped down very soon and they may be used for alternative purposes.

COVID RELATED SPENDS: Verbal promises made to Clusters by HB on Covid -related spends did not materialise. Clusters and Practices were led to believe that anything that would help establishing Covid hubs or looking after Covid patients would be approved. However, HB has now disapproved many expenses (including screens for reception, intercom and automatic door-release measures, cleaning products), creating cash flow problems for Practices. MLMC has asked Practices to provide us further information regarding their financial deficits due to this and whether this has resulted in any sustainability issues. HB has lost goodwill from Clusters and Practices due to this, which has resulted in reluctance by Clusters to participate in new projects such as Virtual Wards.

RE-ACTIVATION

PRIMARY CARE

SERVICE RE-ACTIVATION: SBU HB has asked LMC to comment on a checklist for the Practices regarding their re-activation plan. The LMC has not agreed to co-badge this and advised HB that there is no contractual requirement for Practices to fill in this check-list. HB proposed a half-day closure by Practices to discuss recovery plans, with Practices' own arrangement for emergency cover. MLMC has not agreed to this proposal. In light of National Guidance, MLMC and SBUHB have agreed to cease discussions regarding the local infection control policy and premises guidelines.

PRMISES & INFECTION CONTROL MEASURES: Practices have been pro-active in complying with social distancing and infection control measures as per National Guidelines. SBUHB has been allowed by Welsh Government to consider Covid related premises measures through Improvement Grants. MLMC has asked for detailed information regarding the required steps and timeline for Practices to implement social distancing and infection control measures for premises through these grants.

PRIMARY CARE PHLEBOTOMY SERVICES: Phlebotomists under HB's employment have been withdrawn from Primary Care during Covid period. Cluster based phlebotomy services have not been coping with the need in the community. SBUHB has advised MLMC that services will be returned to Practices but also proposed a cluster based holistic service (encompassing phlebotomy, flu immunisation, chronic disease review measures), utilising cluster funds and transformation funds. Lack of clarity from HB, failure to keep promises in relation to cluster Covid-funds and transformation funds have resulted in Practices being reluctant to participate. MLMC is keen on a Service Level Agreement type of arrangement for phlebotomy rather than the use of cluster funds or transformation funds which can be withdrawn or disapproved in future, leaving the Practices under obligation to continue providing the services.

SECONDARY CARE RE-ACTIVATION: SBUHB has set up a 're-set and recovery group'. MLMC has been advised that cluster leads will be involved in secondary care re-activation plan. MLMC has asked to be invited to these meetings. MLMC currently attends cluster lead/HB meetings regularly. MLMC has been invited to pre-hospital triage group workshops. The first workshop (Transforming Acute Medicine in SBUHB) was held on the 3rd of July 2020 at Liberty Stadium. Proposed reconfigurations include Acute Medical Unit in Morriston, Ambulatory Emergency Care (AEC) in Singleton. The workshop concentrated on figuring out services that could be included under AEC, how to effectively run safe and efficient AEC services that could be streamlined to Acute Medical Unit, speciality hot clinics and procedure clinics.

COMMUNICATION & IT

COMMUNICATION WITH GENERAL PUBLIC & COLLEAGUES: MLMC has agreed to work with the HB's Primary Care communication Group to re-inforce the message that Primary Care has never stopped and we would be expanding our services to return to normal within the next three months. The HB has requested brief tweet sized messages for radio adverts with a Primary Care focus. Recruitment of patients for articles regarding the benefit of use of technology in Primary Care is another area that HB wishes to promote and the LMC has agreed to help.

LMC relationship with HB: SBU HB and MLMC currently have weekly skype meetings (1 hour) in addition to usual Liaison Meetings. These short, informal meetings have been useful. MLMC has been invited to workshops in relation to the re-activation of services in secondary care. MLMC also attends HB/Cluster Lead Meetings (happened weekly between March to May, two weekly in June and monthly from July onwards). Duration of those meetings varied from 1-4 hours. Due to the increased number of meetings and variation in duration of meetings, MLMC exec team has sought out an agreement from the whole committee regarding honorarium payments for LMC elected members.

IT: SBUHB facilitated "Ask My GP" platform through the transformation fund for cluster and "Attend Anywhere" platform for video consultations. Most Practices have installed new telephone systems and

fulfilled Welsh Access Standards. Patients' acceptance of triage systems and remote consultations has been very reassuring. SBUHB and NWIS has agreed to continue supporting the Practices with remote access measures (NWIS remote access laptops & desktop) during Covid period. Practices are still waiting for remote access laptops. These laptops apparently do not work if too many people try to work from home. The NWIS desktop will work better than remote access laptops in this scenario.

FINANCES & ENHANCED SERVICES

ACCESS PAYMENTS: Some practices could not complete the installation of new telephone systems due to Covid 19. The Access questionnaire did not allow flexibility to consider such mitigating circumstances and those practices have lost out on access payments. Clear guidance and help from GPC Wales regarding appeal procedures would be very useful.

ENHANCED SERVICE PAYMENTS DURING COVID: Some practices believed that Covid Enhanced Service Payments resulted in overall loss for high demand areas such as Care Home DES, DOAC and DM DES'. MLMC has advised the Practices of the section within the SFE which allows the Practices to appeal in such circumstances and has encouraged strict record keeping requirements. Help from GPC Wales in this would be very welcome.

COVID CARE HOME DES: Most Practices that took up the Care Home DES have agreed to provide the new Covid Care Home DES in SBUHB. MLMC has advised the Practices regarding record keeping and communication requirements. Some Care Home in SBU area have been included as a Consultant Connect Pilot Project. The HB has bought mobile phones for Practices via a HB contract to provide emergency numbers for direct access. Consultant Connect team has agreed to provide mobile phones to Care Homes in the Pilot Project. This could help with the 15 minute telephone communication requirement for Covid Care Home DES. SBUHB has piloted two weekly virtual MDT meetings that would be useful for Covid Care Home DES requirements. Meeting attendees include Geriatricians, Acute Response Team & Palliative Care Team members. Care homes can refer complex patients directly to the MDT meetings as per their GP's advice and the GPs are invited to the meeting.

Flu vaccination: This year's Flu Vaccination Programme will require compliance with social distancing measures. Special arrangements such as opening for extra hours, vaccination sites that allow vaccination of large group of patients safely and efficiently are being considered. MLMC will start discussions with HB. Help from GPC Wales and Welsh Government regarding resources is required.

Bank Holiday DES: SBUHB may offer the DES for August Bank Holiday.

Sandar Hlaing
Chair