

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD

8 OCTOBER 2021

QUESTION No. 2 in accordance with Standing Order No 36

Tom Lake to ask the Chair of the Health & Wellbeing Board:

#### Urgent Primary Care - Queueing Theory

Queueing theory is a facet of probability theory which helps us understand how well we can satisfy random variable demands with given levels of service. For example, it tells us under plausible assumptions that if appointments are just sufficient to meet demand queues will grow linearly with time, owing to the randomness in demand.

This branch of mathematics explains why we need spare capacity in hospitals and in primary care.

If we are going to provide spare capacity for several streams of demand it is most efficient to provide it in common so that some of the variability smooths out.

Berkshire West CCG is currently conducting a consultation into the need for same day urgent primary care, including providing a central walk-in service at Broad Street Mall practice.

Can we be sure that the CCG will take into account the efficiency and value for money arguments suggested by queuing theory and provide an efficient central overflow service for Reading or will overflow continue to default to the Royal Berkshire Hospital?

**REPLY** by Katie Summers (Berkshire West Vaccination Lead and Director of Place Partnerships, Berkshire West CCG) on behalf of the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board (Councillor Hoskin):

It's pleasing to see more than 520 people have taken part in the survey and engagement exercise and I'd like to thank Mr Lake and his colleagues for helping spread awareness of the survey and for handing out paper copies to those unable to access the survey online.

The engagement exercise is intended to support the CCG in deciding whether the walk-in service is required in the future or whether on the day demand is best provided by registered GP practices, who may work collaboratively, or whether an alternative service is required, such as Emergency Department streaming.

The survey has also helped raise awareness of the alternative options available to encourage appropriate use of the range of services available across Berkshire West and to prevent a default to the RBH. Latest figures show around 100 people go to the hospital's Emergency Department every day when they could be cared for and treated elsewhere. Others contact their GP for an appointment when their local high street pharmacist, who's a highly trained healthcare professional, could help just as well.

Work on appropriate use of services and accessing Primary Care, along with promoting self-care messages, are the key themes of our winter communications strategy.