

3. PAEDIATRIC SERVICES/PAEDIATRIC OUTPATIENT CLINICAL WAITING TIMES UPDATE

The group considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Fiona Mitchell, Director of Children's and Women's Services which provided an update on paediatric services at St John's Hospital and in the wider context of NHS Lothian.

In patient activity levels had been lower than normal since the 24/7 reopening in October 2020 due to the impact of Covid-19; a similar pattern was also being seen at the Sick Children's Hospital in Edinburgh and other units across Scotland.

There were two locums soon to join the team for six months each; one in February and the other in April. They would be used to cover short term medical staffing gaps but as there was some spare capacity built into the out of hours rota there were no concerns for the sustainability of the rota. There were currently no ward nursing vacancies and in fact the ward was slightly over establishment to cover some absence due to sickness and staff shielding.

With regards to Advanced Paediatric Nurse Practitioners (APNP's) there were now 3.77 whole time equivalent (WTE), three of whom worked cross-site. There was also one trainee APNP who would soon qualify and start on the rota in February. There had been no interest in the most recently advertised trainee ANPS post but would be re-advertised in due course.

Finally, with regards to the unit, the team were building up "simulator" training on the ward and looking to develop a Paediatric Emergency Team bleep system and response team to strengthen the response to very sick children on the ward.

The update continued in relation to paediatric outpatient waiting times which had significantly improved over the last few months with almost all children being seen within 9 weeks. However it was noted that some had not been able to honour their appointment due to the Covid-19 pandemic. There were 146 children currently on the waiting list, 3 of whom had been waiting over 12 weeks.

Decision

To note the update in relation to the paediatric unit and outpatient waiting times.