

1.18.4 South Challenges and Risks

Summarise the main challenges that the service may face in the South Locality and describe how you would mitigate against these risks

(Maximum Word Count 1000)
Words used = 529

1.18.4.1-Impact of being the current provider

Vocare's current Staffordshire GP-OOH team has built up considerable knowledge and understanding of the Staffordshire population and the associated health economy over the last 8 years. Many staff are Staffordshire residents and understand the challenges of the demographics and geography first hand.

Our team has nurtured strong collaborative relationships with systems partners to optimise the patient journey with the gain of much mutual experience at managing the challenges we have faced together across the county.

Examples of the challenges/risk we have faced include:

- 2020/21 Covid-19 pandemic: Vocare was a significant system player, coping with unprecedented demand and capacity challenges. Our staff were able to flex their skill sets to meet increased demand in telephone advice and still provide face-to-face care when required for safe diagnosis.
- We accelerated development of video consultations and an enhanced pool of clinicians to reach patients as needed, working in partnership with district nursing, palliative care and care home teams.
- We worked to optimise the patient journey through establishment of good working relationships with community nursing teams to enhance the 'all hours' care model for palliative, end-of-life and long-term conditions. The Staffordshire Clinical Service Manager attends to monthly community nursing forums to maintain active engagement.

1.18.4.2-Challenges across the lot

Challenge/risk	Mitigation strategy
Workforce capacity and capability	We have increased the skill sets in the services, moving to GP led services rather than the previous GP-delivered model in operations when we were first contracted. Implementation of internal apprenticeships and training programmes enhances our offering.

Challenge/risk	Mitigation strategy
Rising demand in activity and patient expectations	<p>Our robust surge management is led by a GP.</p> <p>Robust competent workforce adhering to policies and procedures help to meet patient expectations.</p> <p>Partnership with community services such as CRIS, rapid intervention, district nursing services and children's hospital@home service helps ensure the right care in the right place first time with minimal handover.</p>
Pandemic – Red Patients	<p>We mitigated this challenge and infection risk through use of video consultations.</p> <p>We designated 'Red' sites and teams for Home Visiting.</p> <p>Enhanced home working to support social distancing.</p> <p>Enhanced IPC procedures across the business to reduce transmission risk.</p> <p>Increased staff recruitment to meet resulting additional demand.</p>
Demography and rurality	<p>Increased delivery locations.</p> <p>Enhanced digital offering but mindful of digital poverty implications.</p> <p>Working with patient groups and hard-to-reach communities.</p> <p>Winter weather strategy and ensuring good fleet management with e.g. 4x4 vehicles and emergency vehicle kits.</p>
ICS developments	<p>Vocare is a fully active system partner working to reduce unnecessary ED attendance and acute admissions.</p>
Primary care demand	<p>Enhanced focus on consult and complete.</p> <p>Increased resilience/surge built into workforce planning.</p> <p>Partnership to deliver 'all hours' service to optimise the patient journey.</p>
Palliative and end-of-life care	<p>Partnership with community palliative care teams, hospices and CRIS to optimise the pathways.</p> <p>Attendance within two hours.</p> <p>We hold a supply of anticipatory medication with a fleet car facility to store medication safely across the county to negate needing to return to Stoke base ahead of these calls.</p> <p>We provide onsite and telephony support to community services and paramedic services.</p>
Long-term conditions including long covid.	<p>Partnership working with CRIS and district nursing services.</p> <p>Attendance at community nursing forums to optimise patient-care pathways.</p>