Dear Primary Care Colleagues,

It will be no surprise to you that, during this pandemic and the sequelae of demand on service for all of us; our secondary care providers like all health partners have been feeling the strain. Oxford Health Foundation Trust (OHFT) and specifically, their Community Adult Eating Disorder Service (AEDS) in Wiltshire and Swindon are experiencing a concerning trend in growing referral and acuity rates, which have more significantly increased in the last 12 months [Covid-19 impact], and has been further exacerbated by staff vacancies. As a result, OHFT are managing extended waiting periods for routine referrals. OHFT are desperately concerned that the wait for their service may impact on the patients so have met with BSW CCG and collaborated to produce both short and longer term mitigations. We wish to keep you abreast of these.

Outline of Service Position:

* Urgent and emergency assessments remain as usual
* Continue to be available to our partner agencies for advice and support, although recognise this work has also increased significantly during the pandemic.
* Routine assessment time -  12 weeks and rising; [pre-Covid response time, 4 weeks]
* Post assessment treatment waiting time – 5-6months and rising; [pre-Covid response time 1-2 months].
* Nurse led phone triage of risk based assessments after initial point of referral into service

Whilst the service remains open to all referrals, we ask for your support in monitoring patients whilst the service works to recover their assessment and treatment times. Please find attached a brief outline of the actions underway to support recovery, monitoring guidance, and advice for patients you are supporting and referring into the service, which we intend to be of assistance during this time of increased pressure. Also attached for ease of reference is the service referral form.

We appreciate this is not news we are wanting to hear and please accept out apologies for this. We are hopeful that we will can move together to ensure people are effectively supported, that the team can recover their waiting times and ensure we achieve the best clinical outcomes our patients at this difficult time.  The CCG will be coming out to PCN meetings as applicable for F2F updates and will continue monthly COMMS briefings until the situation rectifies. Should you have any queries before this time please raise these with Dr Sarah Blaikley GP, CCG Lead for MH, Interim LD/ ASD Lead and Joint UC Lead. sarahblaikley@nhs.net and Georgina Ruddle, Assistant Director Mental Health, Learning Disabilities & Autism georginaruddle@nhs.net.