

NHS Rotherham

Health and wellbeing Board January 2012

Rotherham Cold Weather Plan: Incorporating the Winter Plan and Affordable Warmth

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| Contact Details: | | | |
| Lead Director: | John Radford | Lead Officer: | Jo Abbott/ Dominic Bladen |
| Title: | Director Public Health | Title: | Consultant in Public Health |

Purpose:

The report sets out winter planning arrangements for health and social care in Rotherham. It incorporates Rotherham's response to the Cold Weather Plan, issued in October 2012. The Affordable Warmth Strategy is currently being refreshed and this has been incorporated into it thus ensuring all plans are "joined up".

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Health and Wellbeing Board.

- Endorse The Rotherham Winter Plan (attached)
- Note the arrangements that have been put in place to cover winter pressures and extreme weather.
- Note the year round arrangements in place via the Affordable Warmth Strategy

Background:

The NHS Yorkshire and the Humber Footprint Winter Planning Framework (September 2010) sets out the responsibilities of PCTs in relation to winter planning. PCTs are expected to:

- Have an internal escalation process in place for reporting and management of events and serious incidents including performance and media issues relating to the PCT and commissioned services.
- Have systems in place to monitor winter pressures and take action to maintain 'business as usual'.
- Have systems and processes in place to support the local health economy with managing and mitigating any increase in demand to ensure patient and staff safety and outcomes.
- Ensure that it follows that Yorkshire and Humber pre-escalation system as part of its escalation process.

The NHS Cold Weather Plan for England sets out what should happen before and during severe winter weather in England. It spells out what preparations both individuals and organisations could make to reduce health risks and includes specific measures to protect at risk groups. The

cold weather plan depends on having well co-ordinated plans in place for how to deal with severe cold weather before it strikes, including the following essential elements:

- Strategic planning across partner organisations and at a national and local level
- Advance warning and advice during the winter months through a Cold Weather Alert service
- Communicating with the public encompassing general duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- Helping GPs and community services to identify vulnerable patients
- Ensure providers implement measures to protect people in their care
- Ensure staff are fit and well by supplying flu vaccinations to front-line health and social care workers.

Analysis of Risks:

Winter Plan

Last winter presented the local health community with significant challenges. There was a severe weather event at the beginning of December when heavy snow affected the borough. This was followed by a busy bank holiday period, a significant outbreak of the swine flu virus and a follow-on outbreak of the norovirus at the hospital. Despite these pressures there was limited disruption of services. GP Practices in particular provided significant support during the periods of high demand and disruption. All service providers were able to remain open through the snow and ice and then maintained services during the holiday period.

The events of last year were unprecedented but Rotherham FT was still able to maintain service throughout the winter period. This year there is a significant additional risk with the current high levels of emergency admissions. A&E attendances are higher than this time last year as are conversion rates. If Rotherham were to experience a similar spike in demand this year during the winter period the hospital may find it difficult to maintain bed availability.

There were significant issues with the Walk in Centre during 2010/11. The Centre had to close on 7 occasions during the Christmas and New Year period because of spikes in demand. Activity levels for the Walk in Centre reflected those for A&E. There was a 23% increase in activity over the whole period. From Week 52 to week 2 there was a 45% increase in demand compared to the previous year. The spike in demand during early January reflects the situation at A&E.

Care UK has introduced a series of measures to deal with spikes in demand at the WIC. These include;

- Introduction of an appointments system to help spread demand
- Introduction of a single point of contact to filter out inappropriate attendances
- Enhancement of nurse triage and increase in patient flow through the service

The Cold Weather Plan sets out what would happen in Rotherham before and during severe winter weather. It spells out what preparations Rotherham organisations can make to reduce health risks and includes specific measures to protect at risk groups. An E mail “cold weather alert” has been set up by the Met office to key people across Rotherham to help plan in the days before extreme weather is forecast. A robust communication plan has been developed, including to the public about how they can help themselves, and professionals/providers.

The affordable warmth strategy focuses more on prevention and work is carried out all

year round. A community action plan is currently been developed with Age Concern taking a key role. Individuals are advised to insulate their homes and water pipes and check their entitlement to benefits and local grants. Lessons learnt from the successful “Keeping Warm in Later Life” project (KWILLT) have also been incorporated. The public are advised to have the annual flu jab.

Return on Investment:

NHS Rotherham has made significant investment into services through reinvestment of 30% marginal tariff and use of reablement grant. These investments are primarily aimed at reducing emergency admissions during the winter period. Initiatives include;

- Expansion of the Fast Response
- Introduction of nursing support into Intermediate Care
- Development of a community stroke service
- Development of a dementia support service for patients discharged from hospital
- Enhancement of the home care enabling service
- Development of a Virtual Ward

These initiatives are currently operating as pilots and will be reviewed in March 2012.

The Cold Weather Plan has a comprehensive communications strategy advising the public how they can help themselves during periods of extreme cold weather thus preventing unnecessary hospital admission.

Analysis of Key Issues:

NHS Rotherham

The Surge and Mass Discharge Plan has been reviewed and agreed for use by NHS Rotherham in collaboration with partner organisations. The plan is primarily based on supporting health care organisations to manage significant increase in demand in the event of a surge. The plan has been devised and agreed with partners and stakeholders. Once the surge plan has been triggered mechanisms will be put in place to increase patient flow.

QIPP and Reablement schemes have been developed over the autumn to help address winter pressures. These will help to support patients within the community, preventing avoidable hospital admissions and facilitating early discharge.

A Winter Single Point of Contact for patients has been set up to provide signposting, advice and triage for patients to try and reduce attendances at A&E. This will be run by Care UK who will be able to book appointments for patients at the WIC where appropriate.

Rotherham FT

A robust action plan has been developed following issues raised from last year in relation to bed pressures and the severe adverse weather.

Rotherham FT is confident that it will be able to respond to the demand over the winter. Contingency arrangements are in place to ensure urgent elective work will continue during times of unexpected pressure. There is an expected reduction in bed occupancy over the Bank Holiday period due to natural reduction in elective activity. The Trust has an escalation plan for In-Patient medical beds, and Accident & Emergency and Medical Assessment Unit within their Patient Flow Policy for Adults.

Regarding the threat of industrial action by staff, RFT services have Business Continuity Plans in place to manage and prioritise services due to loss of staff.

Rotherham FT has undertaken a reconfiguration of medical beds. The merger of the two existing Clinical Service Units (General Medicine and Healthcare for Older People) will accommodate up to 40 additional surge beds at times of peak demand. A robust policy is in place for opening these additional surge beds.

Rotherham FT has worked closely with commissioners to reconfigure community health services so that they are better able to address winter pressures.

The Fast Response Service has been extended, providing a significant presence at A&E and B1. As part of the Alternative Levels of Care (ALC) work stream, the Fast Response service will lead on diverting patients at the point of entry to hospital into an alternative level of care. From November the Fast Response Team will have a base at A&E. Utilising Interqual the team will be able to identify those patients who do not require admission to hospital. They will co-ordinate the most appropriate level of care in the community and ensure safe hand-off to the relevant community services.

The in-patient service at Breathing Space will be open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and will remain open over the Christmas bank holiday period. New protocols are currently being developed to ensure that Breathing Space is able to provide step-up support to patients who have been assessed by Interqual as not requiring hospital admission.

Rotherham FT Community Services have recently reconfigured their community nursing teams so that they are more responsive to the needs of patients at risk of hospital admission. District nursing teams have been merged with the community matron service to create locality based community health teams. These teams are GP facing, and realigned so that they are better able to support patients with long term conditions, particularly those in exacerbation.

Rotherham FT has also been working closely with commissioners to develop three Virtual Wards in Rotherham which will provide an alternative to hospital care. These wards will enhance care for people with multiple long term conditions and/or those at high risk of acute admission.

Rotherham MBC

Rotherham MBC has worked closely with NHS Rotherham this year to reconfigure services so that they respond more effectively to winter pressures.

The Council has realigned the Intermediate Care Service so that it takes a greater proportion of referrals from Fast Response. Using Reablement Grant the Council has developed a bank of care enablers who can provide additional support to the residential service during peak demand

periods. Working alongside RFT community health services Intermediate Care is also now able to take a different profile of patients who are at high risk of hospital admission. This reconfiguration should enable Fast Response to divert patients from A&E and B1 away from hospital and into an alternative level of care.

Rotherham MBC now has a substantial social work presence in Intermediate Care. Social workers are available to work alongside the Fast Response Service over the winter period. These social workers will help expedite discharge from A&E, CDU and the Medical Assessment Unit. As well as increasing bed availability during winter it will reduce admissions and increase likelihood that some admissions will only incur a short stay tariff.

Rotherham MBC has provided assurance that the hospital social work team has appropriate plans in place to ensure continuity of service during the winter period. The Council has performed well this year in terms of delayed discharges from hospital. Last winter, despite extreme pressure during early January there were no issues relating to delayed discharges.

Patient, Public and Stakeholder Involvement:

Communications on winter planning arrangements will reflect those of last year through Choose Well and the material regarding the local Single Point of Contact. Advice to the public will be carried out through local press and via front line staff.

The draft Cold Weather Plan/ Winter Plan has been to the Joint Health and Social Care Emergency Planning group and the Affordable Warmth Steering group. It has also been to Rotherham Clinical Commissioning group.

Equality Impact:

Ensuring that robust winter plans are in place is key to the more vulnerable members of the community.

Financial Implications:

The financial consequences associated with the risks highlighted in this paper are currently accounted for in the forecast out-turn reflected at Month 7 (Winter Plan 2011/12).

Should any of the actions highlighted in this paper to mitigate the impact of winter not have the desired effect in terms of activity control then there will be a direct financial consequence due to the mechanisms of the PBR system. This could have the result of increasing our expenditure with our main providers beyond that currently forecast.

Approved by: John Doherty

Human Resource Implications:

TRFT has considered the possibility of industrial action that could impact on delivery of service and has reviewed workforce plans to ensure essential functions will be maintained.

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| Procurement: |
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| There are no procurement implications. |
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| Key Words: |
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| Winter Planning Cold Weather Plan Affordable warmth |
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| Further Sources of Information: |
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| Jo Abbott Consultant in Public Health x2156 |
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