

Winter Resilience & Seasonal Pressures in Urgent Care

Update for Central Bedfordshire Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Seasonal system wide pressures

The Bedfordshire health system responded well to the anticipated pressures across the economy over the Christmas and New Year period. Both Bedford and Luton and Dunstable Hospitals remain above the Accident and Emergency patient constitutional standard of 95% in 4 years for the current year.

The first two weeks of January have however, been significantly challenging for all acute trusts not just locally but across the region and nationally. Attendance and admission numbers have remained within expected ranges but the clinical needs of patients have been heightened and complex which has led to problems in patient flow and discharge. This has manifested itself across not only the acute hospitals but community services and social care.

Actions to mitigate the pressures across the system have been led and managed by the Bedfordshire System Resilience Group (SRG) with representation from all stakeholder organisations. The group is currently meeting fortnightly and daily teleconferences are taking place between operational and clinical leads to ensure prompt and effective responses

Key challenges

Several key themes have emerged with regard to the key challenges facing our services so far this winter, for example;

- The increasingly complex needs of patients being discharged into the community. These include a rise in the need for 4 times a day care
- An increasing requirement for home adaptations for patients prior to discharge and family support issues.
- A shortage of available provision of domiciliary care and nursing home places in the right geographical locations.
- Workforce challenges across all parts of the health and social care economy, including primary care and general practice.

Winter Resilience funding

The CCG has allocated a total of £1.035 million of additional funding for high priority winter resilience schemes as agreed by the SRG. These include initiatives such as increased Ambulatory Emergency Care provision, improved discharge assessment, and continuation of the Hospital at Home scheme. All of the agreed winter initiatives are monitored for performance and effectiveness by the SRG on a regular basis.

The CCG has also funded the provision of Ambulance Liaison Officers at the A&E front door at Bedford Hospital to minimize patient handovers and ensure clinical supervision of patients at times of high 999 activity. This function is reflected at all other surrounding hospitals which serve Bedfordshire and is a key component of managing winter and maintain high levels of patient safety and quality of service.

Winter Communications

BCCG along with public health, local authorities, local providers and partner organisations have been promoting the national campaign Stay Well This Winter in

line with NHS guidance. This included the flu campaign, (end September – January) led by public health with regular updates via the flu steering group. BCCG has cascaded NHS England's key messages, press releases and updates on campaign materials to partner organisations and communications teams have met to discuss campaigns.

BCCG focused on cascading information and campaign materials including videos, digital and leaflets via GPs and clinics, through public engagement events, and use of the media (social, print and broadcasting). We published and distributed a guide to staying well. During Self Care Week in mid-November, we focused on flu, how to stay well and where to get medical help, with feature interviews on BBC radio and press coverage. Our second media push was 5 days of interviews with healthcare professionals on BBC radio in the week before Christmas. We advertised on Heart radio for 10 days at Christmas and New Year, ran full page adverts in every Bedfordshire newspaper in mid-December, with further newspaper campaigns up to Christmas.

The communications now align with the national campaign for NHS 111 and we are planning more radio and press coverage, as well as public engagement in January and February while continuing to promote messages about how to stay well and where to go for medical help.

111 & GP Out Of Hours Services

Bedfordshire CCG is required to commission an integrated Out of Hours GP and NHS 111 phone line service for 2017 in line with national guidance. The CCG is currently liaising with Luton CCG with a view to undertaking a joint process across both areas. LCCG and BCCG have proposed to combine resources equitably across the two organisations to undertake this key piece of work.