

Meeting:	NHS Grampian Board
Meeting date:	7 December 2023
Item Number:	12
Title:	System Wide Approach to Winter Planning
Responsible Executive/Non-Executive:	Sandra Macleod, Portfolio Executive Lead, Medicine and Unscheduled Care
Report Author:	Michael Coulthard. Programme Manager – Interface Care

1 Purpose and recommendation

This paper is presented to the Board for:

- **Endorsement** – The Board is asked to endorse the developing approach outlined in this paper and note the progress made.

This report relates to

- Delivery Plan
- Government policy/directive

This aligns to the following NHS Scotland quality ambitions:

- Safe
- Effective
- Person Centred

2 Report summary

2.1 Situation

As endorsed by the Board at its meeting on 5 October 2023, a programme of work is being undertaken at a system level in addition to the winter planning activity routinely carried out by individual partners, to create further linkages between plans and share areas of good practice with a view to implementing changes ahead of Winter 2023/24. This work compliments the ongoing ARI Bed Base Review. In-person networking events were held on 28 September and 23 November 2023.

2.2 Background

Winter planning is a key function and well-established annual process for NHS Grampian and its partners across the Local Resilience Partnership. Given the continued challenges and pressures being experienced across the Health and Social Care system in Grampian and beyond, it is particularly important that the system is prepared for the additional seasonal demand which can be expected over the impending Winter 2023/24 period.

2.3 Assessment

Unnecessary hospital admissions and delayed discharges are not beneficial for citizens, their families or those working within the system and aiming to minimise both remain important areas of focus. Specific consideration is required of how services which are already experiencing sustained periods of pressure will continue to meet the demand anticipated in the coming months. As well as considering what actions are required to meet demand, there is also an opportunity to consider longer-term actions which may contribute to reducing demand, recognising this is an area of focus year-round rather than seasonally.

A system-wide networking event (System Networking Over Winter) was held on 28 September 2023 with representation from NHS Grampian, Aberdeenshire HSCP, Aberdeenshire Council, Aberdeen City HSCP, Aberdeen City Council, Moray HSCP, Scottish Ambulance Service, Police Scotland, Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), Scottish Southern Energy Networks, British Red Cross and Healthcare Improvement Scotland. For this initial event, the focus was predominantly upon the civil contingencies and emergency planning aspects of planning and considered the plans in place and under development at partner agency level. A key component of the event was the running of a developing winter scenario in order to test existing plans, identify any gaps and consider areas of joint working.

While positive feedback was received on the 28 September event, it was apparent that further discussions were required to enable specific operational actions to be identified and progressed. In response to this feedback, a further event was arranged for 23 November 2023 with a focus on how the system would respond to pressures increasing more generally, rather than those created by a major incident. The invite list reflected this difference in scope, with the emphasis on colleagues working operationally across the health and social care system in a variety of settings, levels and roles to enable the exploration of practical solutions to the anticipated challenges.

64 colleagues attended the event on 23 November 2023 to reflect on past experiences and consider what more could be done to assist with preparations for periods of increased demand this winter and beyond. Rather than a pre-planned set of topics for discussions, the outputs from the facilitated group discussions in the first part of the day informed what would be discussed later on. The themes identified were:

- Staff wellbeing
- Communication with patients and the public (including managing expectations)
- Right Care, Right Place (including alternative pathways of care and appropriate patient placement)
- Increasing collaboration, particularly at times of pressure
- Prevention/holistic approach to care
- Improving trust within the system/understanding multiple perspectives

Each group produced specific actions on their topic which will have been collated and will be taken through appropriate forums for agreement, prioritisation and identification of lead individuals/groups to take forward those actions of the highest priority.

2.3.1 Quality / Patient Care

This work should improve the quality of care as it seeks to improve the winter health and well-being of Grampian citizens and, where possible, alleviate some of the additional demand for unscheduled care which presents during the winter period.

2.3.2 Workforce

This approach is intended to have a positive impact for those working across the system. It aims to help increase the understanding the linkages and opportunities for joint working with partner agencies, and encourage new and innovative approaches to winter preparedness. Ultimately, those working within the system are also users of the system and should benefit as citizens as well as staff.

2.3.3 Financial

The financial impact of this work is anticipated to be relatively minor. Funding has been identified for the two in-person events. Further funding may be required to support pieces of work identified through these events which are prioritised for implementation ahead of Winter 2023/24. It is expected that this will be funded from existing Unscheduled Care funding streams and has been discussed at the Unscheduled Care Improvement Programme Board.

2.3.4 Risk Assessment/Management

There is a risk that additional pressure will be placed on a system which is already experiencing considerable demand during the winter period. This work aims to partly mitigate this risk by identifying and supporting implementation of upstream interventions which may reduce some of this additional demand.

2.3.5 Equality and Diversity, including health inequalities

An equality impact assessment has not been completed for this programme of work specifically, however equality, diversity and health inequalities will be routinely considered as part of planning processes within each partner organisation.

2.3.6 Other impacts

No other impacts have been identified.

2.3.7 Communication, involvement, engagement and consultation

Involvement and engagement of stakeholders was carried out through the two events in September and November 2023, which included colleagues from across the Local Resilience Partnership, third sector representatives and care provider representatives. These routes will continue to be used to communicate and engage with stakeholders on the actions that are being progressed.

2.3.8 Route to the Meeting

This has been previously considered by the following groups as part of its development. The groups have either supported the content, or their feedback has informed the development of the content presented in this report.

- Unscheduled Care Improvement Programme Board; 11 July 2023, 8 August 2023, 6 September 2023, 3 October 2023, 31 October 2023
- Grampian Local Resilience Partnership; 8 August 2023
- NHS Grampian Board; 5 October 2023

2.4 Recommendation

The Board is asked to:

- **Endorsement** – endorse the developing approach outlined in this paper and note the progress made.