

NHS preparations for and response to winter in Kent 2017/18

To: Kent Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
From: Ivor Duffy, Director of Assurance and Delivery, NHS England South (South East)
Author: Zara Beattie, Winter Resilience Lead, NHS England South (South East)
Date: 14 November 2017

1.0 Purpose

This report provides a briefing to the Kent Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee that describes the actions taken by the Health and Social Care system to prepare for and respond to winter.

2.0 Background

Historically, the effects of winter have been shown to place additional pressures on health and social care services across Kent. This is caused by a number of issues including an increase in respiratory illness, increased slips and falls and the impact of seasonal influenza.

The key vehicle for winter Preparedness and Response activities are the Local A&E Delivery Boards that were established in 2016. Kent has four Local A&E Delivery Boards covering the Dartford Gravesham and Swanley; East Kent, West Kent and Medway and Swale. Kent County Council is a core member of each of these groups and is represented on them by an Executive Director.

3.0 Winter 2016/17 Debrief

During Winter 2016/17 weekly teleconferences were held with Local A&E Delivery Board leads to share good practice and assist with any immediate issues requiring escalation. An interim stocktake was held on 2 February 2017 to learn lessons from the management of and performance over the Christmas and New Year Bank holidays to implement any necessary improvements ready for the Easter 2017 Bank Holiday. A full Winter 2016/17 debrief was held with system leads on 9 May 2017. Key successes that have been continued for 2017/18 winter planning include:

1. Training for on-call teams particularly in effective teleconference management
2. GP Service provision within A&E
3. Flexibility of implementation of escalation beds and discharge to assess systems

Key lessons that have been incorporated into Winter 2017/18 plans include:

1. Demand and Capacity forecasting and planning process started earlier in the year, including early engagement with workforce
2. Implementing management systems for non-urgent prescribing
3. Automated real-time data collection available in some form across all Local A&E Delivery Boards.

4.0 Local A&E Delivery Board Assurance ahead of winter

NHS England set a clear expectation that all Local A&E Delivery Boards in Kent would have in place robust plans to deliver the urgent care standards and to ensure that plans are in place to effectively manage winter pressures. Therefore ahead of winter 2017/18 NHS England South (South East) and NHS Improvement facilitated a dual assurance process, via self-assessment and peer review, which required Local A&E Delivery Boards to provide assurance that they have put in place preparations for the winter period. This included a review of the key actions being taken to improve on last year's plan, delivery of the national ten high impact interventions, the flu programme for staff and patients and work on Delayed Transfers of Care.

LAEDB Winter Plans have been assessed through a two part bipartite process and have been assured as Amber: "Assurance that the plans reflect some of the relevant criteria but not comprehensively". 'Check and Challenge' face to face meetings and LAEDB exercises provided an update on progress and informed the assurance return to NHS England South sent 18 October 2017. Whilst the overall assessment of the plans remains Amber, as all systems have aspects where they are continuing to strengthen, the progress is good and LAEDB continue to refine and test their plans with support from NHSE/NHSI as required. NHSE are working with all LAEDBS to produce a Kent and Medway surge management plan in the coming weeks, looking in particular to strengthen mutual aid agreements.

5.0 Surge Management Plans and Exercises

All Local A&E Delivery Boards have prepared Surge Management Plans that are aligned to the NHS England South Region Surge Management Framework which was agreed by the South Region Bipartite of NHS England and NHS Improvement. Plans have been updated to incorporate lessons from Winter 2016/17 and Easter Bank Holiday 2017. NHS England and NHS Improvement have also sent a Bipartite Gateway letter (Reference 06969) confirming the four national priorities for winter 2017/18 which have been incorporated into the Local A&E Delivery Boards Surge Management Plans.

NHS England South (South East) will ensure that each Local A&E Delivery Boards conduct a Surge Capacity exercise ahead of winter 2017-18. The Local A&E Delivery Boards' Surge Management plans will then be updated to ensure that these lessons are addressed.

6.0 Winter Communications

All Local A&E Delivery Boards are promoting the nationally led 'Stay Well This Winter' campaign, which is a joint initiative between NHS England and Public Health England. <http://www.nhs.uk/staywell/>

This campaign drives home key messages to the public which will take the pressure off frontline services. The messages ask the public to protect themselves as the cold weather sets in by staying warm, stocking up on prescription medicines or checking in on friends and neighbours to make sure they are keeping well and taking up the offer of a seasonal flu vaccination where eligible.

7.0 Seasonal Flu Vaccination

Outbreaks of flu can occur in health and social care settings, and, because flu is so contagious, staff, patients and residents are at risk of infection. The 2014 - 5 vaccination pilot showed reduced GP consultations for influenza-like illness in children by 94% & adults by 59%, children A&E respiratory attendances by 74%, hospital admissions for confirmed influenza by 93%. As a result front-line healthcare workers are offered a flu vaccination. Local A&E Delivery Boards have put in place measures to maximise and monitor updates by eligible Health and Social Care staff.

Flu immunisation provision has now been extended to health and social care staff, employed by a registered residential care/nursing home or registered domiciliary care provider, who are directly involved in the care of vulnerable patients/clients who are at increased risk from exposure to influenza, meaning those patients/clients in a clinical risk group or aged 65 years and over.

The flu vaccination is also offered free of charge to people who are at risk, pregnant women, carers and some young children to ensure that they are protected against catching flu and developing serious complications. The continued support of KCC in promoting the uptake is recognized and welcomed.

8.0 Winter Response

NHS England South (South East) is operating a virtual winter resilience room between 24 October 2017 and 30 April 2018. The winter resilience room provides a focal point for winter briefings, escalation discussions and communications through the winter. From here NHS England will provide oversight of the Local A&E Delivery Boards response to winter, monitor daily situation reports prepared by hospitals and community services organisations, prepare daily situation reports and briefings and facilitate system-wide requests for support where required.

9.0 Health and Wellbeing Boards and Better Care Fund Plans

The Health and Wellbeing Boards will be contributing to winter planning through the Better Care Fund Plans and the Eight High Impact Change Model self-assessments on Managing Transfers of Care. NHS England will also be monitoring and reporting to the Health and Wellbeing Board level Delayed Transfers of Care figures for NHS, Social Care and joint delays in the run up to November 2017, and by implication the impact of the BCF and IBCF funds. The November 2017 review of performance will link to 10% of the IBCF allocation for 18/19. The reduction in delayed transfer of care is key in providing capacity in the acute sector to enable delivery of safe services over the winter period. It is paramount that health and social care partners deliver the required reductions in DTOCs and commit all additional or hypothecated resources to achieve this.

10.0 Summary

- Local A&E Delivery Boards, of which KCC is an integral part, have taken steps to prepare the health and social care system to manage winter pressures.
- Individual Health and Social Care organisations and Local A&E Delivery Boards have Surge Management plans.
- These Surge Management plans will be tested by exercise and amended to take account of lessons identified ahead of the winter period.

- A strong national communications campaign is being supported and delivered locally. The NHS recognises and welcomes KCC's ongoing support to successfully deliver these important messages to the population of Kent.
- KCC and other partners' support in encouraging the uptake of seasonal flu vaccination is also welcomed.
- DTOC reduction must be a key focus for health and social care partners
- A robust system of winter reporting has been put in place to identify and respond to any challenges as they arise via the Winter Resilience Room
- In addition to the Surge Management Plans, all the members of Local A&E Delivery Boards have robust, well-rehearsed plans in place to manage the impact of emergencies that can result from severe weather, infectious disease outbreaks or industrial action.
- The Surge Management Plans are supported by the Urgent and Emergency Care work stream, Health and Wellbeing Boards and the Better Care Fund Plans.

Zara Beattie

Winter Resilience Lead

NHS England South (South East)