

# Report

Report to:	<b>Social Work Resources Committee</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>10 November 2021</b>
Report by:	<b>Director, Health and Social Care</b>

Subject:	<b>Winter Planning Arrangements 2021-2022</b>
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## 1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to: -

- provide an update on the planning arrangements put in place thus far to ensure services are prepared for the coming winter months – with particular recognition of planning alongside the impact of current staff shortages; Covid-19; national service wide pressures and the other strategic priorities operating this year

## 2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s): -

- (1) that the planning arrangements which have been put in place to ensure services are prepared for the coming winter months and the associated costs be noted; and
- (2) that the work ongoing with Scottish Government to confirm the financial arrangements be noted.

## 3. Background

3.1. This report has been prepared following discussion and agreement within the Winter Planning Group as well as the Senior Management Teams of North and South Health and Social Care Partnerships (HSCPs) and the NHS Corporate Management Team. It has also been shared with the South Lanarkshire Integration Joint Board (IJB).

3.2. It is likely that the Plan will also form part of a meeting with Scottish Government officials in relation to Winter Planning as part of the wider understanding of the Health Board/HSCP mobilisation plan. The self-assessment for preparedness for winter has been submitted to Scottish Government and this is attached at Appendix 1.

## 4. Summary of Key Issues

4.1. Planning for Winter 2021/22 commenced in July and, as in previous years, is a multi-agency approach across NHS Lanarkshire, North and South Lanarkshire Councils together with the respective supports, for example, SAS, NHS 24 etc. The 'Plan' is a dynamic document and will be updated/revised to take account of the level of unpredictability in the wider NHS and Social Care Services and, in particular the scarcity of staff of all types and grades. As such, it is not yet in a 'final state' and will be subject to change over the coming months. In this regard, regular monitoring of staff availability and service priorities will be undertaken such that the Plan can be flexed accordingly, and staff can be directed to those areas of greatest need.

- 4.2. In addition to the foregoing, the letter recently received from John Burns and Donna Bell, Scottish Government – attached at Appendix 2 – is currently being considered with a view to identifying the most appropriate way to seek to deploy the respective resources such that making an investment in one area does not destabilise other areas of the system. Work is ongoing at time of writing of this report and subsequent agreements will be built into the developing plan.
- 4.3. There is a range of specific work streams which have been established to take forward the respective work areas as below.

**a) Flu and Covid Vaccine Programme – Public**

Almost 400k people will be eligible for either a flu vaccine, Covid vaccine or both in 2021 and this will be the largest flu vaccination campaign ever undertaken. Both North and South Lanarkshire Councils have assisted in the identification of the venues for the campaign. The venues have been chosen to get a good balance between accessibility, safety, and an ability to get as many people vaccinated safely as quickly as possible. A recruitment drive has sought to maximise as many dedicated staff as possible to be available to deliver the vaccination programme, however, there will continue to be the requirement to bolster the core staff with a range of bank staff, staff able to do additional hours and also using independent practitioners, for example, GPs, Optometrists etc. At time of writing, the vaccination programme is on schedule.

**b) Flu/Covid Vaccine Programme – Health and Social Care Staff**

Similarly, to the public vaccination programme, so too there will also be the largest ever vaccination programme for staff. This will include Social Care staff from both Council and independent and voluntary sectors in Lanarkshire, NHS employed staff, and all teaching/school-based staff who will be eligible for a flu vaccine. Additionally, many of these staff will also be eligible to receive a Covid vaccine and this also features as part of the overall vaccination programme. The programme is well underway.

**c) Provision of Urgent Care Flow Hub – Flow Navigation Centre**

As part of the planning for winter, the Urgent Care Flow Hub – FNC, established for winter 2020/21, will be expanded to maximise coverage over the peak winter months. A dedicated public comms campaign is ongoing to encourage as many people as possible who would previously have gone directly to A&E to be managed in a different way. This has also been extended to GPs who rather than refer patients to ERC to arrange admission, will also have the opportunity to discuss cases with an appropriate secondary care clinician with a view to ensuring patients are managed in as 'planned' a way as possible, whether that be to access diagnostics, further assessment or indeed admission.

**d) GP and Pharmacy Opening**

As in previous years, following the break from this last year, there will again be an NHS Lanarkshire LES (Local Enhanced Service) to support GPs opening on public holidays this year. This will take place on Tuesday, 28 December 2021 and Tuesday, 04 January 2022 with a view to ensuring there is more access for patients on the fourth day of each of the four-day public holiday periods. Additionally, GPs will also be offered the opportunity to open on each of the subsequent two Saturdays in January. There will also be an extended public holiday Pharmacy Service available to ensure that people can both access

prescriptions as well as being available for re-direction from NHS24/Urgent Care Flow Hub.

**e) Planning for Additional Deaths**

The Resilience Planning Officers of North and South Lanarkshire previously worked alongside local undertakers to ensure there is sufficient 'pace' of funeral services – both burials and cremations – to support the eventuality of a significant excess of deaths over the winter period. Additional mortuary capacity is also available across the three hospital sites.

**f) Staffing**

As noted above, this is of particular importance this year given the two 'four day' weekend/Public Holiday periods.

There will be social care staff in the hospitals across the public holiday periods to support early identification of people who may require support packages to facilitate discharge. Additionally, social work and care at home staff will also be available in localities to help facilitate same.

**g) Well-Being of Staff**

There is a range of supports that have been put in place to seek to maximise the well-being of our staff and to recognise the respective pressures being faced in the current climate. These include provision of rest areas, counselling services and other online supports which staff are able to access.

**h) Adverse Weather**

A series of actions is open to the Board/HSCPs in managing adverse weather and these have been refined over many years of winter planning.

**i) Overall Resilience Planning**

A review of the plan will be undertaken by the SLC/NHSL/NLC resilience planners to give objective opinion as to the range and extent of the mitigating factors introduced to reduce the impact of winter on the overall system. A desk top exercise concentrating on management of concurrent respiratory disease across the care home sector was held on 26 October, 2021. This assisted in identifying a number of actions which can be taken in advance of winter to assist in supporting mitigating actions should an outbreak/outbreaks occur.

**j) Communications**

A review of the plan will be undertaken by the SLC/NHSL/NLC resilience planners to give objective opinion as to the range and extent of the mitigating factors introduced to reduce the impact of winter on the overall system. A desk top exercise concentrating on management of concurrent respiratory disease across the care home sector was held on 26 October, 2021. This assisted in identifying a number of actions which can be taken in advance of winter to assist in supporting mitigating actions should an outbreak/outbreaks occur.

**5. Employee Implications**

- 5.1. A number of temporary posts/supports for staff to additional hours to support the peak winter pressures will be funded from Winter Planning monies which will be allocated to SLC to cover the respective staff who are appointed. As will be appreciated, given the national shortage of care staff, it is not possible to predict at this stage the extent of the additional staff who will be available.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1. Thus far, advice from Scottish Government is that the content of the Winter Plan and associated costs have to be included as part of the wider mobilisation plan.
- 6.2. Each of the HSCPs have submitted plans with respective costs. It is recognised however, that given the national shortage of available staff across a range of specialities, it is very difficult to predict with any certainty at this time the success of the respective recruitment campaigns.
- 6.3. Dependent upon the availability of staff to recruit, it is recognised that the overall costs may vary. Additional resources will be available to support the overall Plan, and these will be factored in as more clarity emerges on how the respective finding can be utilised.
- 6.4. As such, the cost of the Winter Plan 2021/2022 will be refined to reflect the progress made in recruiting the respective staff. The cost will be met from within the financial envelope available which will include both core budgets and additional Scottish Government funding as necessary.
- 6.5. The cost of the Winter Plan 2021/2022 will be included as part of the ongoing financial monitoring arrangements and final anticipated costs will be included in the more defined plan which will be submitted in December.

## **7. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications**

- 7.1. No Climate Change, sustainability and environmental implications associated with this report.

## **8. Other Implications**

- 8.1. Availability of staffing over the peak winter period has been identified as the major risk. This is obviously heightened by the fact that there is the scope for a series of major issues all to coincide concurrently.
- 8.2. Depending on further advice from Scottish Government as well as local 'command' arrangements, it may be necessary to re-prioritise some services, standing down some services which have recently started to recover such that other services can be provided, for example, Covid and flu vaccines, Surge Ward Cover, Community Palliative Care and so on. The respective areas are all included in the overall Risk Register and reviewed regularly.

## **9. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**

- 9.1. A range of partners have been involved in the development of the arrangements.

**Soumen Sengupta**  
**Director, Health and Social Care**

29 October 2021

## **Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives**

- ◆ Focused on people and their needs

- ◆ Improve health, care and wellbeing
- ◆ Deliver better health and social care outcomes for all

### **Previous References**

- ◆ none

### **List of Background Papers**

- ◆ Appendix 1 – Self Assessment Checklist – Winter Preparedness
- ◆ Appendix 2 - letter from John Burns and Donna Bell, Scottish Government

### **Contact for Further Information**

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