

## REPORT TO ABERDEENSHIRE INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD 29 MARCH 2023

### Grampian Operational Pressure Escalation System (G-OPES) Update

#### 1 Recommendation

##### It is recommended that the Integration Joint Board (IJB):

- 1.1 Acknowledge the actions taken by the Senior Management Team of the Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership (AHSCP) to alleviate the pressures across health and social care services in Aberdeenshire.
- 1.2 Support the further actions that the AHSCP senior management team will take to further alleviate pressures.
- 1.3 Agree to send a formal letter of thanks to staff.
- 1.4 Agree to receive ongoing assurance via the weekly G-OPES Overview Report submitted to the Clinical and Adult Social Work Governance Committee where the system remains at G-OPES level 4.

#### 2 Directions

- 2.1 No direction requires to be issued to Aberdeenshire Council or NHS Grampian as a result of this report.

#### 3 Risk

- 3.1 IJB Risk 8 – Risk of failure to deliver standards of care expected by the people of Aberdeenshire in the right place at the right time. The AHSCP Senior Management Team will implement actions in line with the G-OPES Framework and working closely with key partners to safely maintain critical services and mitigate risks, with regular assurance provided via the agreed escalation pathway through the Clinical and Adult Social Work Governance structure.

#### 4 Background

- 4.1 The Grampian Operational Pressure Escalation System (G-OPES) is a standard whole system approach established by NHS Grampian to define levels of system pressure and linking this to clearly defined actions, with the aim of supporting the system to effectively manage these pressures, to collaborate and balance support and resource across the whole system. G-OPES uses four levels to describe pressure in any part of our system, from Level 1: where the health and care system capacity is maintaining flow and we are able to meet anticipated demand within available resources; through to

Level 4: where pressure in the system continues despite actions taken at Levels 2 and 3, and decisive action must be taken collectively to recover capacity and ensure clinical care and safety.

- 4.2 AHSCP has developed its own local framework of the Board level descriptors for each of our critical services. The G-OPES framework for evaluating levels of system pressure was adopted by AHSCP in January 2022 and a process for exception reporting agreed by the Clinical and Adult Social Work Governance (CASWG) Committee on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2022.
- 4.3 The CASWG Committee, in line with the escalation pathway, formally advised the IJB Chair and Vice Chair on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2023 that Aberdeenshire HSCP has been operating at level 4 since 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2023 due to sustained pressures on the system.
- 4.4 The next steps on the escalation pathway require IJB members to be informed of the situation to allow for the challenges to be highlighted and appropriate responses to be discussed with members.

## 5 Summary

- 5.1 Ongoing significant pressure on the system as a whole and additional coinciding challenges have created unprecedented circumstances and resulted in the Aberdeenshire G-OPES level remaining at level 4 for more than 4 weeks.
- 5.2 At the time of writing the AHSCP has six individual service areas reporting at level 4: Care Homes and Very Sheltered Housing, Community Hospitals, Older People/Physical Disability Care Management, Mental Health Services, Mental Health Officers, and Community Treatment and Care Services.
- 5.3 This is a complex and challenging situation with a variety of factors contributing to these services being at level 4. Other services including Care at Home and Primary Care (General Practice) are also at Level 3 and under significant and sustained pressure. This reflects the situation across Grampian where health and care services have continued to face unprecedented challenges since the pandemic and continuing beyond the winter period, where the sustainability of the health and care system was under already significant pressure due to demography, population health need and workforce pressures. The most significant pressure presents in the system's ability to effectively and safely manage the flow of patients, where our capacity in Aberdeenshire has been compromised in terms of both bed availability and care at home capacity.
- 5.4 Senior and operational management and professional/clinical leads continue to implement a range of actions in response to these challenges and in line with the G-OPES Framework, including twice daily meetings to ensure oversight of the overall situation and actions being taken to maintain delivery of critical services across Aberdeenshire. This is in addition to assurance and oversight gained through regular additional meetings focused on individual

service areas (for example community hospital daily bed huddle meetings, care at home and care homes/very sheltered housing oversight and assurance groups, and daily scrutiny of delayed discharges).

- 5.5 At level 4 the AHSCP's response can include where required the urgent deployment of staff outside their normal workplace and diversion of staff from non-critical roles. At this stage the AHSCP will also consider a request for support from partners and discussions continue with Council and NHS partners in this regard. Intensive support and resources have been directed to individual areas of service where specific operational issues have arisen requiring focused activity, including the ongoing management of the situation at Peterhead Community Hospital and in individual care homes where specific service and operational issues are requiring significant focus, resources and support from the AHSCP.
- 5.6 The Senior Management Team is immensely grateful to teams who continue to be flexible and resilient in providing support to areas of the system most in need to ensure critical services are delivered. The Senior Management Team is acutely aware of the significant challenges for staff and partners in sustaining day-to-day delivery of care and services under these circumstances and will continue to focus on support for staff wellbeing through the various measures and resources already in place, whilst ensuring effective communications to staff on issues as they present.
- 5.7 The immediate urgent measures described above sit alongside the various actions and options which continue to be actively pursued to seek sustainable resolution of these challenges. Recruitment options continue to be explored in an effort to recruit to vacant posts across a range of professions and services and to be creative in our approach to addressing some of our current gaps in staffing. IJB members have been advised of the redesign work commencing under the AHSCP's new strategic delivery plan with the aim of addressing the systemic challenges facing the system particularly in relation to Social Care Sustainability.
- 5.8 There is inevitably increased risk on the management capacity of the Senior Management Team and wider teams due to the requirement to respond to a number of coinciding significant challenges. Additional risk is being carried by SMT due to increased operational responsibilities relating to wider system demands, and Senior Manager On Call duties that sit alongside strategic and professional roles.
- 5.9 The AHSCP Senior Management Team will continue to closely monitor and implement actions to mitigate risks in line with its G-OPES Framework. It is proposed that the IJB continues to seek assurance on this from its Clinical and Adult Social Work Governance Committee supported by the Clinical and Adult Social Work Governance Group.
- 5.10 The Acting Chief Officer, along with the Chief Finance Officer and the Legal Monitoring Officers within Business Services of the Council have been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments have been incorporated within the report.

## 6 Equalities, Staffing and Financial Implications

- 6.1 The screening section as part of Stage One of the Integrated Impact Assessment process has not identified the requirement for any further detailed assessments to be undertaken. This is an update for the IJB in terms of the operational decisions being made to alleviate pressures across the AHSCP and seeking agreement to ongoing assurance being provided via the weekly G-OPES Overview Report continuing to be submitted to the Clinical and Adult Social Work Governance Committee where the G-OPES level remains at level 4. Therefore this does not have a differential impact on people with protected characteristics.
- 6.2 Staffing implications are as outlined in the report above. There are no specific financial implications arising from the recommendations within this report.

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