

## **REPORT TO ABERDEENSHIRE INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD 6 DECEMBER 2023**

### **WINTER PLANNING 2023/24**

#### **1 Recommendations**

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

- 1.1 Consider and comment on the continuing preparation being undertaken by the Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership with respect to resilience and surge planning for 2023-24.**

#### **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 8 – Risk of Failure to deliver standards of care expected by the people of Aberdeenshire in the right place at the right time - working closely with partners across health and social care services, including third sector, will help to maintain essential and safe services for people and mitigate risks associated with increased pressure and demand.

#### **4 Background**

- 4.1 In October 2023, officers reported to the IJB the work that had been undertaken to date in respect of preparedness for winter 2023-24 and building resilience to surges in demand.
- 4.2 On 2<sup>nd</sup> November a further workshop was held and attended by representatives from across AHSCP senior and operational management teams, Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action (our Third Sector Interface), Aberdeenshire Council and Public Health.
- 4.3 The primary focus of the workshop was to populate a Resilience and Surge Plan documenting our current position and additional actions required in relation to activity across 4 key themes: Prevention and Anticipation of Demand, Staff Health and Wellbeing, Collaborative Working and Operational Resilience (Appendix 1).
- 4.4 Systems were established during the Covid-19 pandemic to monitor demand and capacity across Aberdeenshire health and social care services. Operational status is linked to the Grampian Operational Pressure Escalation System (G-OPES) model which defines levels of system pressure and links them to clearly defined actions.



- 4.5 Aberdeenshire HSCP developed its own framework of the Board level descriptors for each of its critical services. The Aberdeenshire framework was reviewed in April 2023 and sets out specific actions to be taken by each service at every level to mitigate risk including activities that can be stepped down when resources can be diverted to other areas and implementing priorities of care.
- 4.6 There is a reporting and escalation pathway in the event that Aberdeenshire HSCP is operating at level 4 for a sustained period of time, initially to the Clinical and Adult Social Work Governance Group and on up to the IJB.
- 4.7 As regularly reported to the IJB, the HSCP has had to respond to sustained and significant pressure on the health and social care system as a whole and extending beyond winter 2022/23, in particular as a result of workforce pressures affecting Care at Home, Care Homes and Very Sheltered Housing, Community Hospitals, Older People and Physical Disability Care Management, Mental Health Services, Community Treatment and Care Services and Primary Care (General Practice). This has been heightened by the unprecedented impacts of two care home closures in the South Aberdeenshire area alongside major premises issues impacting on community hospital beds in Huntly and Peterhead. All of this combined has made the safe and effective flow of patients and ability to create capacity very challenging, reinforcing the importance of a planned and proactive approach to the winter period.

## 5 Summary

- 5.1 In September 2023 Aberdeenshire HSCP completed a self-assessment 'Winter Readiness Checklist' as a part of the Grampian submission to Scottish Government. This exercise was to assess the preparedness of local systems in relation to 4 key areas: Overview of Preparedness and Business Continuity; Urgent and Unscheduled Health and Social Care, Planned Care; Primary Care, Mental Health and Social Care; and Health and Social Care Workforce and Staff Wellbeing.
- 5.2 Review of the checklists will be incorporated within NHS Boards' quarterly annual delivery plan reviews in quarters one and two.
- 5.3 On the 24<sup>th</sup> October, the Scottish Government published their [Health and social care: winter preparedness plan 2023-2024](#). The plan recognises the interdependence of health and social care and reinforces the importance of employing a whole system approach to relieve pressure during times of increased demand. The plan describes 8 priorities which coalesce under 3 critical principles:
1. Right care, right time, right place
  2. A partnership approach across the whole system
  3. Local and national actions we know work
- 5.4 Local winter planning activities have taken cognisance of Scottish Government's principles and priorities and cross-referenced activity on the



Aberdeenshire Resilience and Surge Plan with the priorities identified in the Scottish Government's Winter Preparedness Plan.

- 5.5 The activities identified in the Aberdeenshire Resilience and Surge Plan (Appendix 1) can be attributed in large part to feedback from staff gathered through the engagement activities earlier in the year in response to asking what worked well during winter 2022/23 and what would make the most difference to frontline services: to increase capacity and improve flow through the system.
- 5.6 HSCP staff have been central to the development of the Aberdeenshire Resilience and Surge Plan. The views of staff were sought, listened to and acted upon, empowering them to influence activity. This is to acknowledge the challenge of delivering front line services during times of increased demand and pressure, and the expertise the wider staff group bring to the planning process.
- 5.7 In line with the above, the Aberdeenshire Resilience and Surge Plan will be widely shared with staff throughout locations to be used as a tool to support local discussions about business continuity.
- 5.8 The Aberdeenshire Resilience and Surge Plan should be seen in the context of all business as usual HSCP activity and medium to longer term improvement or transformational work. The Plan focuses on those actions that will impact upon surges in demand, either preventing a surge in activity or enabling the system to flexibly respond.
- 5.9 Recognising the interdependencies of different parts of the system, the Aberdeenshire Resilience and Surge Plan is part of a whole systems approach with the HSCP working alongside partners in Grampian to support one another to maintain even service delivery. Aberdeenshire are participating in an NHS Grampian event in November where the focus will be upon operational actions to enable better flow over the winter and consider what can be done when demand is high.

The event will explore where support from others can be offered/provided, with a view to identifying clearly defined actions which will improve flow for future winters.

- 5.10 Given the sustained nature of pressure upon Health and Social Care services and in recognition of the IJB's responsibilities as a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) (2004), it is the intention that the Aberdeenshire Resilience and Surge Plan will be a rolling plan as opposed to winter specific. The Plan will be reviewed in the spring and updated as necessary.
- 5.11 In the course of developing the Plan, some actions were identified that could support system resilience but are medium term pieces of work and will not have an impact this year. These actions will be taken forward with the expectation that they will be adopted in a future iteration of the Plan.

- 5.12 There has not been a repeat of the winter funding that was provided by Scottish Government in 2022/23 and enabled the HSCP to commission interim beds and recruit additional staff.
- 5.13 Notification of indicative funding, to the end of the financial year, has just been made to Grampian HSCPs, for an expansion in Hospital at Home services. Work will begin at pace to utilise the resources to enhance the existing Virtual Community Ward model in the Garioch area with the outcome of more people being supported at home and avoiding admission to hospital.

## **6 Equalities, Staffing and Financial Implications**

- 6.1 The Chief Officer, along with the Chief Finance Officer and the Legal Monitoring Officer within the Business Services of the council have been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments incorporated within the report.
- 6.2 The screening section of the Integrated Impact Assessment was completed as part of the development of this report and no impacts have been identified. The report does not have a differential impact on any groups with protected characteristics and each individual project relating to Winter Planning and Delayed Discharges will have an Integrated Impact Assessment as part of the process.
- 6.3 There are no specific financial implications for this paper as work will be undertaken within existing budgets with the exception of the funding from Scottish Government reference in 5.13.

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10 November 2023

### **List of Appendices:**

#### **Appendix 1 – Aberdeenshire HSCP Resilience and Surge Plan 2023/24**