



REPORT TO ABERDEENSHIRE INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD 11 OCTOBER 2023

WINTER PLANNING 2023/24 AND DELAYED DISCHARGE PERFORMANCE AND RESPONSE

1 Recommendation

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

- 1.1 Notes and provides comment on the preparations being undertaken by the Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership (AHSCP) with respect to winter planning for 2023-24.**
- 1.2 Acknowledges and provides comment on the current position and work underway by the AHSCP to support a reduction in Delayed Discharges and enable maximisation of capacity through winter.**

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. By working closely with partners across the health and care system including the third and independent sectors we will maintain essential and safe services for the people of Aberdeenshire and mitigate risks associated with increased pressure and demand.**

4 Background

- 4.1 In March 2023, the Chief Officer requested that work be undertaken to understand the effectiveness of the actions taken by the AHSCP last winter so that key lessons could be learned to in turn support planning for winter 2023/24. This followed a period of sustained and significant pressure on the health and care system extending beyond the traditional winter period of higher demand. This report provides an overview of the outputs from that debrief and associated work being undertaken on a Grampian-wide basis to support our preparedness and reporting to Scottish Government.**
- 4.2 At its meeting on 23 August 2023, the IJB requested further information on the HSCP's performance and actions in relation to the management of Delayed Discharges. This report includes the response to this request reflecting the interconnectedness of these issues and requirement for our winter planning to incorporate close oversight and scrutiny of Delayed Discharges as a key performance metric monitored both locally and nationally and how we plan to maximise capacity and support patient flow through the winter period.**



5 Summary

5.1 In May and June of this year, the AHSCP engaged with colleagues from across all health and social care services to gather views on the effectiveness of winter plans last year and priorities for winter 2023/24. The following stakeholder engagement events relating to winter planning were conducted with staff:

Winter Planning Survey	19.05.23 - 30.05.23	A survey shared with wider teams, both operational and managerial looking at AHSCP plans last winter.
Winter Debrief and Planning Workshop	13.06.23	Workshop to discuss the effectiveness of last year's winter plans, the priorities and actions required this coming winter.
Health, Social Care and Sports Committee Survey on Winter Planning 2022/23	15.06.23 – 30.06.23	A survey supporting the HSCP's response to a short inquiry with the aim of reviewing the effectiveness of the Scottish Government's winter plans last year and informing recommendations for this coming winter.

5.2 Responses received from the Winter Planning Survey were used to inform the agenda for the Winter Debrief and Planning workshop which was held in June 2023. The primary outcome of the workshop was to review last year's winter surge and resilience plans and produce initial outputs for consideration moving into this winter. Representatives from AHSCP's senior and operational management teams and Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action were invited to attend. Following the conclusion of the engagement activities detailed above the following emerging themes were identified.

Patients and Capacity

- Maximising use of capacity via interim beds, care home placements and respite. Ensuring clear public messaging in the run up to and throughout winter, improved assessment pathways and increased rehabilitation opportunities for patients where possible.

Staffing

- A robust winter staffing plan focusing on the recruitment and retention of staff across HSCP services with particular focus on posts that are hard to recruit to, as well as increasing supportive measures, promoting staff health and wellbeing through the use of supervision, wellbeing programmes and continuation of the staff vaccination programme.

Collaborative Working

- Working collaboratively with communities, the voluntary sector and wider partners/colleagues to ensure early planning, increased understanding and improved joint working. Increased awareness of the availability of third sector initiatives and clear communication across all levels of services, supporting positive working relationships.

Procedures, Systems and Planning

- Ensuring a clear proactive plan of what services can be stepped down or diverted in time of extreme pressure, continued local resilience planning and robust risk assessments. Minimising duplication and supporting staff autonomy where possible, particularly in times of pressure.

Buildings, Maintenance and Equipment

- Ensuring buildings are winter ready and improved pathways for accessing equipment, supporting staff working in remote and rural locations through existing measures (i.e. pool cars fitted with winter tyres).



- 5.3 Further work is underway to identify and prioritise the main areas of focus for this coming winter based on the initial outputs. This work rests over and above the existing contingency plans and long-standing measures and arrangements in place within the HSCP building on its winter and surge resilience plans last year and daily reporting as part of the Grampian Operational Pressure Escalation System (G-OPES), to ensure our readiness to respond to increased system demands (reflecting the IJB's responsibilities as a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) 2004).
- 5.4 These themes from the debrief will also be mapped against the areas of activity being progressed through Grampian wide planning arrangements for winter following agreement to work collaboratively with all partners as a whole system on the preparation of a Grampian Winter Contingency Plan. The aim is to reduce duplication and support greater connectedness of planning and effort, building on existing local initiatives and improvement work in place through the NHS Grampian Unscheduled Programme Board, with a particular focus on how we can support and where required increase capacity across Grampian to optimise patient flow through efficient and effective discharge processes.
- 5.5 This reflects and will support our response to the Scottish Government's ask of NHS Boards and HSCPs to work collaboratively on the completion of a 'state of readiness' checklist for winter 2023/24. The winter resilience priorities set out by the Scottish Government in development of its Winter Plan are as follows:
1. *Where clinically appropriate, ensure people receive care at home, or as close to home as possible.*
 2. *Through clear and consistent messaging, we will have a strong focus on prevention and give people the information and support they need to better manage their own health and care, and that of their families.*
 3. *Support delivery of health and social care services that are safe and sustainable.*
 4. *Maximising capacity and support wellbeing of our workforce to meet demand.*
 5. *Protect planned care with a focus on continuing to reduce long waits.*
 6. *Prioritise care for the most vulnerable in our communities.*
 7. *Work in partnership to deliver this Plan.*
- 5.6 The checklist requires local health and care systems to assess their preparedness in four key areas underpinned by a range of sub-sections/statements: 1. Overview of Preparedness and Business Continuity; 2. Urgent and Unscheduled Health and Social Care, Planned Care; 3. Primary Care, Mental Health and Social Care; and 4. Health and Social Care Workforce and Staff Wellbeing. AHSCP has participated in the completion of the Grampian checklist with an extract of data attached as at Appendix 1 in relation to those areas relevant to the HSCP.
- 5.7 Review of the checklists will be incorporated within NHS Boards' quarterly annual delivery plan reviews in quarters one and two. The AHSCP's areas for focus have been informed by and will contribute to our quarterly returns to



Scottish Government using the Whole System Discharge Planning Self-Assessment Tool, through which all local systems must be able to provide assurance as to their current position and actions in place where required to support admission avoidance and facilitate timely discharge. The AHSCP senior management team will also be engaging with the national Whole System Oversight and Planning Group to provide assurance as to the system capacity required to meet the forecast demand for this winter and the impact of the measures and actions we will have in place, recognising our local pressures and impact on delayed discharge performance.

- 5.8 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.
- 5.9 Early intervention and prevention approaches will of course be critical working in partnership with Public Health, NHS and local authority partners, the third sector and communities. Central to the system's response will be the continued successful implementation of the Covid and flu vaccination programmes. As a precautionary measure in the Scottish Government's response to the newly identified COVID-19 variant, BA.2.86, as of 1st September 2023 NHS Boards were requested to bring forward the delivery of winter vaccinations to those groups at highest risk from severe COVID-19. The AHSCP vaccination team has reviewed and revised its arrangements as part of the Grampian programme to ensure we can respond to this, identifying vaccinators to commence vaccinations in care homes and for house bound patients, and bringing forward arrangements for allocating additional capacity for vaccination of the 75+ age group and most at risk cohorts.

Delayed Discharges

- 5.10 A continued area of scrutiny for the AHSCP will be in how we manage and reduce the number and length of delayed discharges within our community and acute sector hospitals. Delayed discharge describes the situation where a hospital inpatient has been assessed as being clinically ready to be discharged from hospital but cannot be discharged. Delayed discharges are of concern due to the potential negative impact on a person's health and wellbeing including an increased risk of loss of functional ability and independence. Delayed Discharge data can provide an indication of how effectively the process for assessment of patients and implementation of

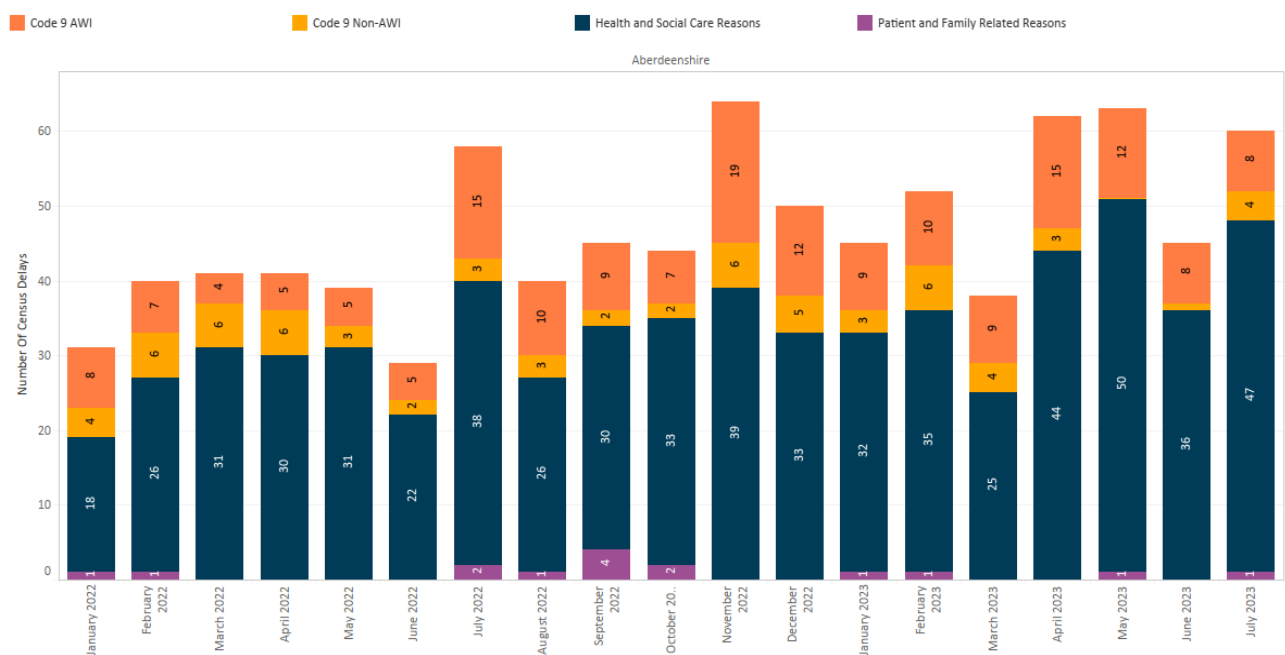
discharge plans is operating but is just one indicator of how well community-based services are meeting the needs of the local population.

5.11 Delays are reported under three main categories:

- Health and social care reasons – Where a person is awaiting appropriate arrangements to be made by the HSCP in order to be safely discharged.
- Patient, family and carer related reasons – This includes delays due to legal reasons and disagreements.
- Code 9 complex reasons – Where discharge arrangements are more complex due to the specific care needs of the person (this includes sub-code reasons of Adults With Incapacity (AWI)).

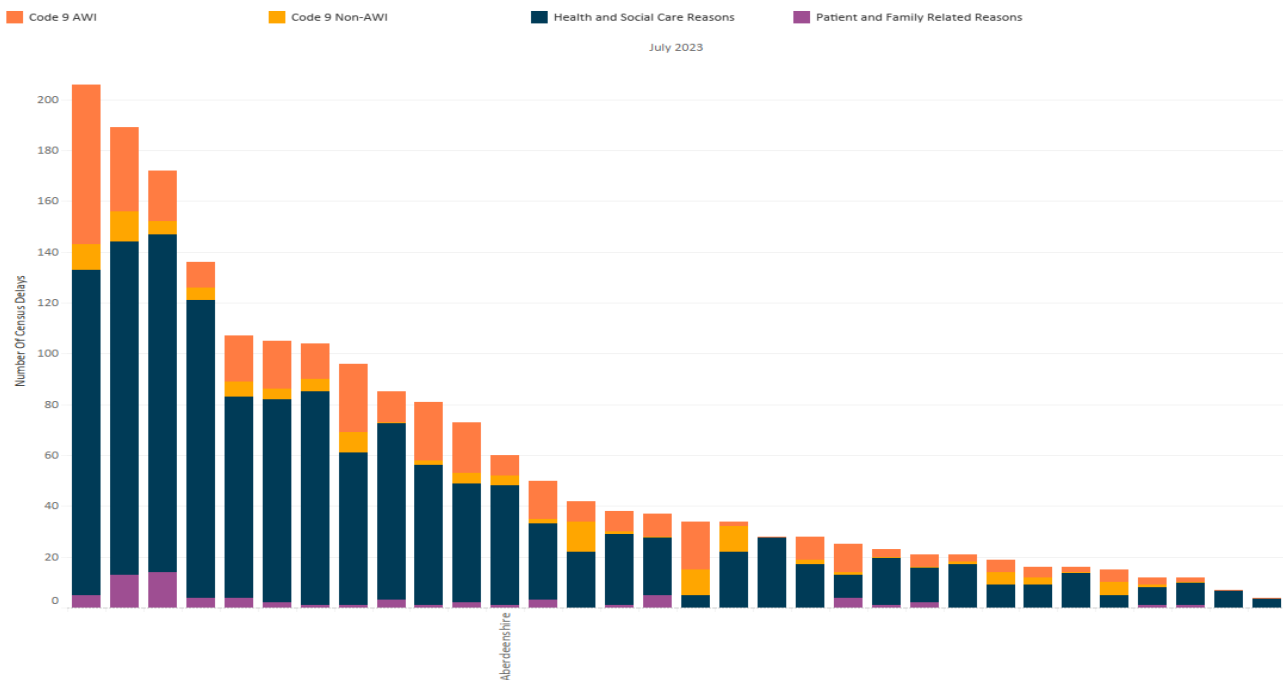
5.12 Aberdeenshire's performance based on monthly census data since January 2022 is provided below, illustrating the general fluctuating position over the 18-month period but a sustained higher position since winter 2022/23. Place availability and care arrangements consistently dominate sub-code reasons for delays in Aberdeenshire, reflecting our pressures on care home beds and care at home capacity. People who have complex care or dementia care needs generally will wait longest for placements.

Monthly Delays at Census Point, Aberdeenshire HSCP, July 2023



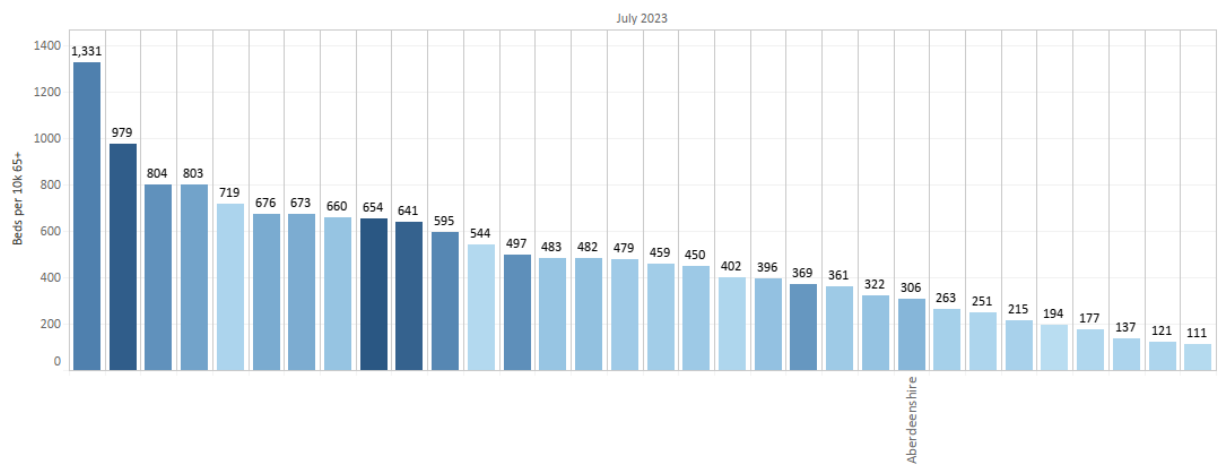
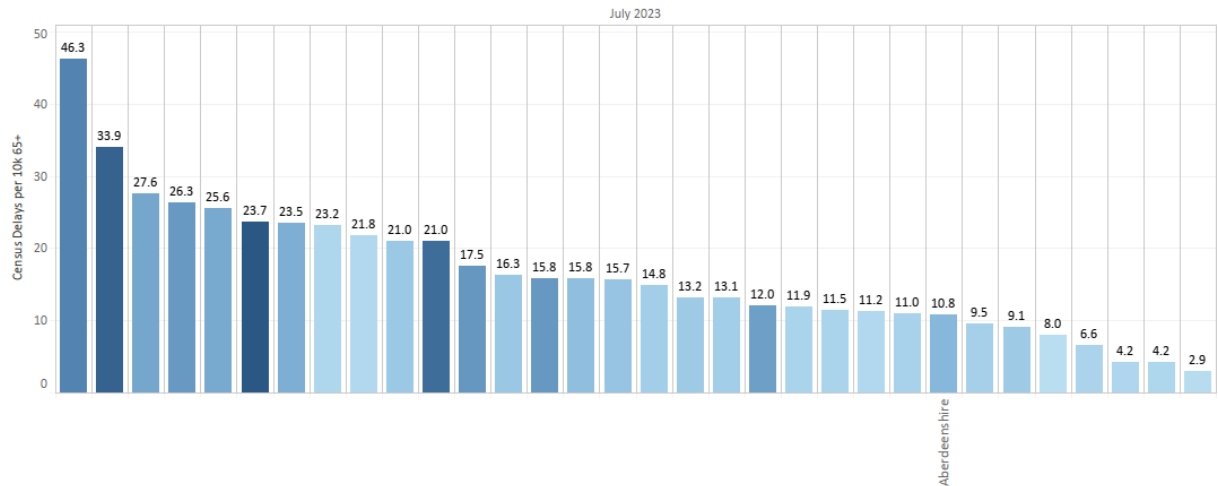
5.13 Aberdeenshire's performance based on monthly census data as compared against the other 31 HSCPs (anonymised) across Scotland is illustrated below.

Monthly Delays at Census Point by HSCP, July 2023



- 5.14 The AHSCP continues through a variety of measures to monitor and manage our delayed discharges as efficiently as possible - recognising that each of these numbers represents a person whose outcomes have the potential to be detrimentally impacted the longer they remain a delayed discharge - alongside available data on social care assessment, capacity and provision. The data alone will also not reflect the consistent and significant time, effort and resources of local teams in striving to achieve the best outcomes and care for patients who are delayed discharges as well as the many people who continue to be safely supported in the community (minimising unnecessary hospital admission), carers and families through effective multi-disciplinary team working.
- 5.15 Further analysis by Health Intelligence utilising rates data derived from national sources provides greater context to Aberdeenshire's delayed discharge performance when considered against 65+ population rates.¹ The charts below illustrate Aberdeenshire's position against all other HSCPs in Scotland when considering both total delayed discharges and bed delays at census point (bed delays are the number of days patients spend in hospital after being assessed as clinically read to leave hospital). The darker the bar, the higher the number of people aged 65+ in the area.

¹ Data sources: [Delayed discharges in NHSScotland monthly - Figures for July 2023 - Delayed discharges in NHSScotland monthly - Publications - Public Health Scotland](#); [Scotland's Census 2022 - Rounded population estimates | Scotland's Census \(scotlandscensus.gov.uk\)](#)



- 5.16 In order to be clear as to areas for improvement locally, a workshop was held on 1st August 2023 with the involvement of around 100 practitioners from across Aberdeenshire to review various elements of delayed discharges. This included mapping of current processes from admission through assessment and on to discharge, to determine any variations and identify how pathways can be streamlined.
- 5.17 The workshop provided the opportunity to recognise what is working well in Aberdeenshire currently whilst acknowledging the challenges and barriers of managing delayed discharges. Practitioners were facilitated to discuss and identify areas for improvement retaining a central focus on how we can improve outcomes for patients. A total of 14 key themes were identified from which a comprehensive action plan has been generated and being considered by the HSCP Senior Management Team to agree support for overseeing the implementation of work required, linking with wider Grampian wide work to ensure collaborative working and reduce potential duplication.
- 5.18 Whilst the AHSCP will require to focus resource on ensuring operational system processes and resilience measures are in place to support patients, staff and communities through the period of increased seasonal demand impacting on our delayed discharges, this must sit alongside longer-term improvement and transformational redesign work needed to support capacity creation and sustainable models of care.



- 5.19 The AHSCP's Social Care Sustainability Programme for example is a fundamental plank of our Strategic Delivery Plan with the aim of creating self-improving and sustainable models of care and system delivery to reduce unmet need. The HSCP's Complex Care project is leading work locally in response to the national 'Coming Home' report recommendations to reduce the number of delayed discharges and out-of-area placements for people with learning disabilities and complex care needs.
- 5.20 This reflects the emerging system wide environment where pressures and demands present as a year-round challenge for health and social care requiring the AHSCP to be agile and able to step up its surge capacity and response to continue to safely provide critical services to the people of Aberdeenshire whilst supporting and ensuring the wellbeing of our workforce.

6 Equalities, Staffing and Financial Implications

- 6.1 The 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.
- 6.2 The screening section of the Integrated Impact Assessment was completed as part of the development of this report and no impacts have been identified because the report does not have a differential impact on any groups with protected characteristics. Each individual project relating to Winter Planning and Delayed Discharges will have an Integrated Impact Assessment completed as part of the process.

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13 September 2023

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Aberdeenshire 'Winter Preparedness' Self-Assessment 2023/24