

REPORT TO:	HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD 21 October 2020
SUBJECT:	Winter Preparedness 2020/21
BOARD SPONSOR:	Rachel Flowers, Director of Public Health
PUBLIC/EXEMPT:	Public

SUMMARY OF REPORT:

This report provides an update on the system planning for the winter to mitigate additional pressures on health and social care arising from the current second wave of Covid-19 and other winter pressure such as flu.

BOARD PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT:

HWBB strategy priorities and outcomes, in particular *A better start in life* (Priority 1) and *A stronger focus on prevention* (Priority 7)

Council's Corporate Plan, including:

People live long, healthy, happy and independent lives: through our public health messaging, adult social care and support for vulnerable residents.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There are no financial impacts arising from the recommendations in this report

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the Health and Wellbeing Board note the contents of the report and encourages its members to work in an integrated manner to:

- Support local winter planning efforts by promoting services available to residents to help them stay well and healthy over the winter period
- Keep abreast of winter planning activities and support quick and effective collaboration between partners in order to overcome any system pressures that arise
- Act as champions for flu vaccination and encourage residents to take up the offer of the vaccination.

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to summarise the plans and therefore preparedness of the Croydon health and care system to minimise additional pressures resulting from seasonal winter events and the current second wave of Covid-19.

2. WINTER PREPAREDNESS 2020/21

- 2.1 Winter pressures and planning is a key issue for the acute, mental health, community and ambulance service trusts, social care and local authority services. Demand for health and social care fluctuates seasonally, peaking in the winter. The reasons more people get ill/ die in winter are complex, but evidence shows that it is often vulnerable populations, including the elderly and those living in deprivation, who are worst affected by the challenges of winter months.
- 2.2 Seasonal pressures over the winter can impact the quality of health and social care services. The NHS and social care systems often reach maximum capacity during the winter months, with NHS bed occupancy often around 95% (NHS England, 2019). The most recent data show that there were approximately 49,410 excess winter deaths in England and Wales in 2017/18 (ONS, 2019). In 2020/21 there will be additional pressure on the health and care system that may well exacerbate existing winter challenges, by even further increasing demand on resources.
- 2.3 This report documents three of the most challenging winter pressures facing the Croydon system this year, outlines the local responses to these challenges, and then summarises key local plans that will be in place over the 2020/21 winter period to ensure the health and social care system in Croydon is best equipped to support residents effectively.

Part 1: Winter pressures

3. Winter Pressure- COVID-19

- 3.1 2020 has seen unprecedented challenges for the health and social care system due to the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 has challenged service delivery and system resilience. Nationally it is anticipated that there is likely to be an increase of COVID-19 infections over the winter period.
- 3.2 We are now in a second wave of COVID-19 nationally, with continued local or regional epidemics likely throughout the winter months. Health and social care services have been re-designed/ reconfigured to adapt to COVID-19 secure requirements, but this is likely to have a knock-on effect on non-COVID care during winter, potentially causing delays in access to treatment. Further, the backlog of non-COVID care and treatment may have already led to people living with poorly managed long-term health conditions, and higher number of people with undiagnosed illnesses (both physical and mental health), both of which might surface during the winter months and put additional demands on an already overstretched system. These factors will be further compounded by anticipated increases in staff sickness levels over the winter months (Academy of Medical Sciences, 2020¹).

¹ <https://acmedsci.ac.uk/file-download/51353957>

- 3.3 Locally, public health has worked extensively with partners to develop the COVID-19 outbreak control plan, published on Croydon Council's website, which details how we will respond to COVID-19 outbreaks in Croydon. It covers plans for preventing the spread of the virus, monitoring cases via a multi-agency data hub, testing, contact tracing, managing outbreaks in high-risk locations including schools, care homes, and places of worship, and supporting vulnerable populations. The plan is also supported by a detailed communications plan. The development of this plan leaves the local system in an advanced state of preparedness to control and respond to the Covid-19 second wave. The considerable join-up and collaboration between organisations that has taken place to create the Croydon Outbreak control plan, and with the wider Croydon public, has created enhanced system resilience that will help to mitigate and respond to winter pressures.
- 3.4 There has been significant learning and development from the first wave of COVID-19 locally, including establishing systems to identify and support vulnerable residents, and the previously shielding population, which can now be used to mitigate harm during the second wave, and support local plans to protect residents from flu, and winter pressures generally.

4. Winter pressure – Cold

- 4.1 The latest government figures (2018 data) show 17,108 Croydon households are living in fuel poverty. Fuel poverty statistics are calculated from the energy efficiency of the homes, and household incomes, but taking into account any specific needs of the household, for example those with higher energy needs due to medical conditions. With residents losing income and spending more time at home due to COVID-19, the number of residents struggling with heating their homes and paying their bills will be much higher. Citizen Advice Bureau estimate that 2.8M UK households are currently in debt to their energy suppliers, and this number is likely to increase considerably as winter approaches.
- 4.2 In 2015 the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) published guidance NG6: Excess winter deaths and illness and the health risks associated with cold homes. Croydon Healthy Homes (CHH) is Croydon's domestic energy efficiency support programme, which operates in line with the guidance's 2nd recommendation (to ensure there is a single point of contact health and housing referral service for people living in cold homes). The objective of the programme is to tackle fuel poverty and deliver carbon emissions savings across Croydon's homes. This is achieved through one to one support which support residents in reducing their energy costs while still keeping warm. The service is targeted at households at risk of being in fuel poverty, or with health conditions exacerbated by living in cold or damp conditions.
- 4.3 Croydon Healthy Homes has delivered over 1000 home visits to date through two externally commissioned services with different providers. In early November 2020, a new in-house service will launch, through a team of 2 x full

time advisors and a co-ordinator. The team will be able to offer one to one support to 800-1000 households a year over a 2.5 year period.

5. Winter pressure – Seasonal flu

- 5.1 There is also the potential pressure of a flu epidemic. Flu can be a severe illness in vulnerable people, potentially causing serious complications such as pneumonia. Sometimes it can be fatal. Those most at risk from flu are also those most vulnerable to COVID-19. This coming winter we will be faced with co-circulation of COVID-19 and flu. Flu vaccination is the most effective way to reduce pressure on the health and social care system.
- 5.2 This year the government is launching the largest flu vaccination programme in history with more people eligible than in previous years. The flu vaccination programme this year will be targeted primarily at those of greatest risk from both flu and COVID-19. It is hoped that the expansion of the free flu vaccination programme this year to include all at-risk groups (including healthcare workers) and children aged between 2 and 12 will help to relieve pressure on the health system over the winter by preventing simultaneous surges in COVID-19 and flu infections.
- 5.3 Croydon's system approach to flu is based on a strong partnership approach between the CCG, Public Health, communications, and local stakeholders. The seasonal flu vaccination programme has multiple key strands:
- Work with national and regional teams to ensure local delivery of ambitions and targets
 - Communication (joint communication is being planned between the CCG, Public Health and local partners)
 - General Practice Preparedness
 - School Age Children
 - Care Home Residents and Staff
 - Frontline Health & Social Care Workers (FHCW), including employee staff flu vaccination programmes
- 5.4 Croydon CCG has also submitted a local action plan to NHS England, as part of their annual requirement around flu planning.

Part 2: Local system plans

6. Winter Planning – One Croydon

- 6.1 All organisations in Croydon are developing winter plans to ensure there are arrangements in place within each organisation to manage winter pressures. On top of this, an overarching winter plan for Croydon is currently in development, with contributions from all key agencies involved in supporting residents over the winter period. The core components of the overarching partnership winter plan are set out in the table below:

Effective management of Covid-19 and other infectious diseases in the borough

- Preventing healthcare-acquired Covid-19
- Emergency planning for potential second wave of Covid

Proactive and preventative approach to keep Croydon well over winter

- Managing complex patients
- Population health management approach
- Supporting care homes staff and patients
- Flu vaccination programme for staff and the community

Support the people of Croydon to stay independent and only admit to hospital if required and for minimum period required

- Avoiding hospital admissions through community services
- Proving same-day emergency care (SDEC) services to avoid emergency admissions where possible
- Discharge patients as soon as they are medically optimised

Make sure we have the capacity to care for the people of Croydon in the right place at the right time throughout winter

- Effective workforce management
- Capacity plans (staff, equipment, inpatient beds)
- Clear escalation actions within services, organisations and across system
- Protect elective activity and integrity of 'Covid Protected' zone

6.2 Winter Planning Update – Croydon Health Services

6.3 In August 2020, the Prime Minister confirmed that Croydon Health Services had been successful in securing funding to upgrade its winter preparations, alongside 116 trusts in the country. Croydon secured more than £2.5 million, which will be used for:

- Reconfiguring ward areas and installing additional equipment, creating safe clinical environment for patients who need to be treated somewhere other than in our emergency department (ED).
- Providing a dedicated 'same day' mental health facility for patients who have both a physical and mental health need.
- Creating a dedicated surgical assessment unit to ensure that the number of medical inpatients doesn't impact on our ability to deliver same day emergency surgical care.
- Implement a community intravenous (IV) facility, reducing the number of patients who need to attend or be admitted to hospital for antibiotics.

- Expand our emergency diagnostic capacity by providing two dedicated emergency rooms, so that we can provide timely care in the Same Day Emergency Care unit (SDEC).
- Implement the direct booking from NHS 111 to SDEC, ED and our urgent treatment centre (UTC), reducing footfall and waiting time in ED.

7. Winter Planning Update – Croydon Council Social Care

7.1 Croydon Council Health, Wellbeing and Adults will use the Department of Health and Social Care Adult Social Care – our COVID-19 Winter Plan 2020/21 when planning locally. The plan is split into four themes:

- preventing and controlling the spread of infection in care settings
- collaboration across health and care services
- supporting people who receive social care, the workforce, and carers
- supporting the system

7.2 The plan principles are as follows:

- Proactive and preventative measures to keep Croydon independent and well during winter
- Capacity and escalation plan, eg:
 - Covid-19 Hospital Discharge Service
 - Placements
 - Homelessness
 - Social workers
- Service improvements/transformation schemes planned before winter
- Prioritised proposals for additional initiatives, should further resources be available

7.3 Locally, a number of plans are in place to increase support and capacity over the winter period, including:

- Focussed additional funding to cover additional adult social care staff resources during winter for enhanced discharge from hospital, i.e. to cover longer days and weekend working (Living Independently for Everyone Services (LIFE) remains at 7 day working, and brokerage support is available at weekends).
- Enhanced senior management support over weekends to the hospital and community social work teams.
- Increased intermediate step-down beds in the hospital, supported by the enhanced social work presence in the integrated discharge lounge at the hospital. Enabling proactive discharge of residents with a coordinated reablement offer.
- Building on the strength of the One Croydon partnership, our Integrated Care Network plus pilot in Thornton Heath is intended to make it easier for people to access the care they need and to reduce health inequalities.

- The Telemedicine service has been extended for 12 months starting from December. 75 care homes have the service. In addition, the provider has developed a new portal to allow other health and care professionals in Croydon to connect to the telemedicine laptop in the care home to support other virtual consultations and assessments.

8. Winter Planning Update - Communications

8.1 A number of coordinated communication and engagement activities are planned to support winter preparedness:

- The SW London communications and Engagement group work closely to ensure consistent messaging is shared across health, the council, One Croydon Alliance and 3rd sector partners
- Croydon's Public Health team lead on the extreme cold messaging for vulnerable people which is adopted by the whole Council and, along with the Flu messaging is pushed by the corporate communications and engagement team to ensure the wider public are aware and can take action.
- We will be supporting the 'NHS is here for you' campaign to reassure local people that it is safe to return to the NHS and seek advice and treatment when they need it.
- Engagement with people of Croydon, including seldom heard groups, to inform the communications for the Flu Vaccination will be a priority. This insight shared across the SW London Communications and Engagement Group
- Another priority will be regularly communicating the NHS Test and Trace advice and guidance, and wider public health messaging, to maximise awareness and stop the spread of COVID-19 to Croydon Council staff and the public.

9. CONSULTATION

9.1 Winter planning arrangements are developed and shared between health and care partners; a collaborative approach to winter planning is essential. The partnership approach will be documented most clearly in the forthcoming One Croydon Winter Plan.

10. SERVICE INTEGRATION

10.1 Addressing the various winter pressures referenced in this report requires a continuation of close synergy between all partners involved, CCG, Croydon Council, NHSE, Public Health England, and local stakeholders committed to protecting residents' wellbeing.

11. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 11.1 All actions within this paper will be absorbed within current resources, hence there are no direct financial implications from this report
- 11.2 The outbreak control plan is enabling the development of local systems and services required to respond effectively to the pandemic in Croydon.

Approved by: Josephine Lyesight Head of Finance, on behalf of the Director of Finance, Investment and Risk

12. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 12.1 The Head of Litigation and Corporate Law comments on behalf of the Director of Law and Governance that there are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Approved by: Sandra Herbert, Head of Litigation and Corporate Law on behalf of the Director of Law and Governance & Deputy Monitoring Officer

13. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

- 13.1 There are no direct human resource implications arising from this report.
- 13.2 Winter planning forms part of the ongoing integrated working between teams within the Council and its partners within health and the voluntary sector. Appropriate measures have been put in place to manage the additional pressures anticipated during the winter period. In addition, careful human resource planning has been undertaken to ensure that any staff absences due to sickness do not result in adverse patient/service user care or experience.

Approved by: Debbie Calliste, Head of HR for Health, Wellbeing and Adults on behalf of the Director of Human Resources

14. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 14.1 Actions to address winter pressures aim to address inequalities and improve outcomes of all those with protected characteristics. Improved vaccination rates, for example, protect vulnerable members of society who are the most at risk if there is an outbreak of flu and may lack protection if they are unable to have vaccination due to underlying conditions.
- 14.2 There is a particular risk of severe illness from flu in the following cohorts:
- Older people
 - The very young
 - Pregnant women

- 14.3 Older people, and those on low incomes, will be directly supported by the work of Croydon Healthy Homes.
- 14.4 All outbreak control and winter planning is based on and aimed at identifying areas of inequality and addressing these by targeting services and intervention as well as communications and engagement. There has been a disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, which we are addressing through our local COVID-19 response efforts. There is also specific work to actively encourage take up of flu vaccine in these communities too.

Approved by: Yvonne Okiyo, Equalities Manager

15. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

a. WILL THE SUBJECT OF THE REPORT INVOLVE THE PROCESSING OF 'PERSONAL DATA'?

NO

Rachel Flowers, Director of Public Health

b. HAS A DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT (DPIA) BEEN COMPLETED?

NO

No processing of personal data is involved in the subject of this report.

c. The Director of Public Health comments that the subject of this report is a higher level description of the plans and preparedness for winter pressures across the system in Croydon. No personal data has been used in this report.

(Approved by: Ellen Schwartz on behalf of the Director of Public Health)

CONTACT OFFICER:

Dr Ellen Schwartz, Consultant in Public Health, Croydon Council
Ellen.schwartz@croydon.gov.uk 020 8726 6000 Ext. 61644

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT

None

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None