

# LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

<b>REPORT:</b>	<b>HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF DECISION</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> October 2024
<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>Winter Planning</b>
<b>CORPORATE DIRECTOR / DIRECTOR:</b>	Matthew Kershaw, Chief Executive, Croydon Health Services NHS Trust and Place-Based Leader for Health Annette McPartland, Corporate Director, Adult Social Care & Health
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	Liz Wells, Managing Director, Acute Services, Croydon Health Services Stephen Hopkins, Head of Adults Placement, Brokerage & Market Management
<b>LEAD MEMBER:</b>	Cllr Yvette Hopley Cabinet Members for Health and Adult Social Care
<b>AUTHORITY TO TAKE DECISION:</b>	-
<b>WARDS AFFECTED:</b>	All

## 1 SUMMARY OF REPORT

Health and social care are working together to prepare for the winter period 2024/25. Croydon Health Services NHS Trust (CHS) presented the draft plans at the One Croydon Health and Care Board in September. See Appendix 1 for the latest, detailed plans.

The Council has identified ten areas of focus to mitigate against increased demand, workforce challenges and uncertainties around covid-19 infections and flu outbreaks during the winter season.

Winter planning across South West London is coordinated by South West London Integrated Care Board. Planning includes consideration of acute services, Urgent Community Response, reablement and intermediate care, capacity in primary care, 111 services, and mental health. See Appendix 2 for details.

Communication with residents about services in the community, including promotion of the vaccination offer and use of pharmacies is included in planning.

## 2 RECOMMENDATION

That the Sub-Committee note the joint work in Croydon and across South West London to plan for winter 2024/25.

### 3 BACKGROUND AND DETAILS

Details of the plans led by Croydon Health Services and South West London Integrated Care Board (ICB) are attached at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

#### Overview of local winter plans

Local plans across Croydon system partners are summarised below.

The CHS Winter Plan sets out the key objectives for the Trust, working in partnership to:

- **Maintain Patient Safety and Quality of Care:** Ensure uninterrupted services and the highest possible standards of care during increased demand, and reduce the spread of winter-related illnesses such as influenza, COVID-19, and Norovirus.
- **Optimise Patient Flow and Resource Utilisation:** Maximise the use of available beds, staff, and equipment, and streamline admission, treatment, and discharge processes to improve throughput and reduce wait times.
- **Enhance Staff Preparedness and Well-Being:** Ensure adequate staffing levels, support staff with training and resources, and maintain morale and productivity.
- **Strengthen Infection Prevention and Control:** Implement measures to prevent and manage infectious diseases, including promoting vaccination programs.
- **Effective Communication and Coordination:** Ensure seamless communication within the Trust and with external partners and educate the public on how to access care appropriately.
- **Contingency Planning and Flexibility:** Prepare for unexpected situations such as extreme weather or outbreaks, and quickly adapt strategies based on real-time data.

These objectives align with the NHS 2024/25 Operational Plan, which emphasises improving A&E waiting times and ambulance response times.

CHS plans summary is as follows:

- **Virtual Ward** – Funding has been given to the Virtual Ward team to provide 7 day services up to 11pm, extended from 8am to 8pm in order to provide additional capacity to this busy service over winter.
- **Strengthened admission criteria** – Clearly defining criteria to support clinical decision making in admitting patients.
- **Escalation Areas** – Opening of appropriate escalation areas to support admission of acutely unwell patients into the most appropriate area.
- **Same Day Emergency Care** – Delivering direct access for patients arriving via ambulance for frailty and medicine SDEC areas, improving surgical SDEC areas, and protecting all areas to support flow.
- **Volunteer Services** – Enhanced volunteer support in ED for nutrition and hydration.

- **Enhanced Staffing Levels** – Wherever possible, placing additional areas in critical areas to meet demand during peak periods, ensuring safe and timely care for patients.
- **Discharge Delay Events** – Working with system colleagues to resolve delays and support discharge for complex patients.

Croydon GP Collaborative was allocated additional Primary Care funding of £75k by South West London for winter planning. The initial proposal by GP Collaborative is to provide the two GP Urgent Care Hubs (the only ones in SWL) with the funding to enable additional appointments and expand the telephone triage service, currently provided to one of the PCNs. The Urgent Care Hubs have a strong workforce bank and indicated the ability to provide additional capacity to routine appointments over winter to support Practices.

Adult Social Care are working in partnership with the NHS in supporting our most vulnerable residents who have care and support needs. The winter plan supports around the key areas identified of:

- Increased demand and acuity
- Workforce Challenges
- Uncertainties around covid-19 infections and flu outbreaks

The Council's specific areas of focus for winter are:

- **Supporting discharges by use of Discharge Fund.** As part of the Better Care Fund(BCF) local authorities and ICB have received funding specifically for supporting discharge for 24/25. The Council has agreed plans for this for 24/25 which focus on:-
  - ✓ Increased staffing levels in the hospital, LIFE team, Triage Team and Placements & Brokerage to support discharge.
  - ✓ Supporting increased costs for packages of care for pathway 1 and pathway 3 discharges due to increased demand and acuity
- **Covid-19 and Flu Vaccinations** - The Autumn-Winter 2024-25 Flu & Covid seasonal vaccination programme started on 3 October 2024 for residents and health and social care workers including anyone working in a healthcare setting and in contact with vulnerable individuals. Supporting Croydon Health Services and SWL ICB, there are regular webinars with all care providers to focus on vaccinations and the importance of this. Care home vaccinations are being carried out by GP practices and where appropriate the SWL ICB Croydon Primary and Community Team have made alternative arrangements with other providers to ensure all eligible care home residents receive their vaccination in a timely manner. We will continue to work with care providers and frontline staff in support of vaccinations. All care homes are being contacted for both residents and staff vaccinations and Council officers will follow this up when they visit homes to see if they can support.
- **Social Care Provider availability-** Overall availability of provision is good at the current time for both home care and bedded provision. Commissioners will continue to monitor this and check in with key areas over the winter months around availability. The Council is encouraging all Care Homes to regularly complete the NHS Capacity tracker which has a section on voids/vacancies to help get up to date information.

- **Winter Step Down/Step Up Beds-** Over the last two winters we have had some step down/step up beds to support discharges and prevent admission into hospital. From the lessons learnt over the last two years it is anticipated that we will have around 8-10 beds available from mid-November 24 to 31 March 2025 which are similar levels to 23/24. This to support around residents that cannot return immediately back to their usual place of residence for a short period.
- **Workforce Planning-** Whilst overall we have a strong workforce and a strong provider market within Croydon, there are still pressures in certain areas. The Council have adopted the South West London Social Care Workforce Strategy and will continue to work on the key areas of this. This supports around ensuring that there is a skilled and available workforce to meet demand levels.
- **Xmas & New Year Support-** A specific plan will be in place from 16 December 2024 to 5 January 2025 to support this busy time to ensure that we support discharge and keeping residents safe in the community. This plan will be finalised by the end of November 2024.
- **Continued transformation improvements-** There are various transformation projects to support flow and reable/rehab residents. This work will continue during the winter and will support winter plans. For an example is the improvements of the new ways of working of the Integrated Discharge Team.
- **Patienteer introduction-** Overall system visibility of discharges to all key partners/stakeholders is critical in reducing length of stay. The Council will continue to support the introduction over the winter which will improve forward planning for discharges and reduce delayed/cancelled discharges.
- **Multi Agency Discharge Events(MADE)-** It has been agreed that these will be now held monthly with all key partners/stakeholders. These will continue throughout the winter.
- **Housing/Homeless Support-** A key issue around length of stay and delayed discharge is around the number of residents who require housing/homeless support. Over the last 8 months a dedicated Housing/Homeless Officer has been recruited and based at CUH to support this. This has been extended until the end of March 2025 whilst a long term plan for support is recommended.

## Winter communications campaign

Communications and engagement professionals across the system are working on the winter campaign plans and activates – the objectives are:

- Behaviour change - campaigns and community insights to support demand management
- Making staff aware of support available and raising morale
- Outlining the robust health and care system response to winter pressures
- System response to incidents under the Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response (EPRR) framework

The priority areas of focus for 2024/25 communications and engagement activity are:

- Vaccinations & immunisations – (staff) promotion of COVID-19 and flu vaccinations amongst health and care professionals, focussed on workforce resilience and protecting yourself against winter illnesses – in line with national messaging
- Vaccinations & immunisations – (public) eligibility and how to book appointments (addressing key concerns)
- NHS app - for prescriptions and online booking – in line with national messaging
- Pharmacy First - highlighting support available – in line with national messaging

There is also an increased emphasis on community insights recognising developments in our VCSE grants programme:

- Grants are offered to grassroots VCSE organisations, partnering with VCSE umbrella organisations to support organisations.
- VCSE organisations run events they know local people be interested in, prioritise funding where health inequalities are greatest.
- Training and materials are offered to support organisations to have the right conversations about how to access urgent care services and relevant immunisations - including leaflets in different languages spoken in that community.
- Insights are collated about people experiences and thoughts about how services run.

## 4 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

The winter plan supports the Mayors Business Plan objectives of:

- The Council balances its books, listens to residents and delivers good sustainable services
- People can lead healthier and independent lives for longer

## 5 IMPLICATIONS

### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As part of the Better Care Fund the Local Authority and ICB have received funding specifically for supporting discharge for 24/25 and this enables delivery of the winter plan. The amounts are set out in the table below.

Local Authority	LA allocation	ICB allocation	24/25 total
Croydon	2,331,526	3,112,652	5,444,178

## 6 CONTACT OFFICER:

Rachel Flagg  
 Programme Director, One Croydon Alliance  
[Rachel.flagg@swlondon.nhs.uk](mailto:Rachel.flagg@swlondon.nhs.uk)

## **APPENDICES**

- Appendix 1 - CHS Winter plan 2024/25
- Appendix 2 - South West London Winter plan