



Report sponsor: Robyn Dewis, Director of Public Health

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ITEM 5a

Partnership Winter Pressures

Purpose

- 1.1 To provide the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) with an overview current and emerging pressures across the Derby health and wellbeing system.
- 1.2 In addition, the report sets out the activity happening in the city to mitigate the pressures and risks identified.

Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the contents of this report.
- 2.2 To identify and consider any further winter risks and challenges and any further action that can be undertaken to reduce and mitigate these risks.

Reason

- 3.1 To ensure that the Health and Wellbeing Board is fully aware of the risks and challenges that local people and the health and wellbeing system of Derby is likely to face during winter.
- 3.2 To ensure that the full capability and capacity of the Health and Wellbeing Board, its members and partners, is maximised to most effectively address the challenges and pressures posed by winter.

Supporting information

- 4.1 Winter presents a challenging time many local people and for the health and wellbeing system in Derby. This includes the increased prevalence of seasonal illness, risk of severe illness and death within our vulnerable populations and pressure on a range of services, particularly health and social care.
- 4.2 Winter pressures are not new, and we have been facing significant challenges during winter over many years. These pressures, however, are becoming increasingly acute and challenging, exacerbated by issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic and cost of

living crisis. Some of the key issues currently being faced in the city are outlined below:

4.3 Risk of flooding - 21st October saw the river Derwent reach its highest recorded level in the city. Surface water from heavy rainfall in addition to river flooding led to significant travel disruption and flooding of some businesses and homes. However, the latest stage of the Our City, Our River flood defence programme performed well and limited the damage. Colleagues worked incredibly hard alongside partner agencies to manage the response and recovery phases. Mitigation plans are in place and will be reviewed for any future events over the winter, and further flood defence work is planned as part of the next stage of the OCOR programme.

4.4 Health and social care - our NHS and social care services face significant pressure during winter. Earlier this year, Derby and Derbyshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) published the health system's operational plan. In late July 2023, NHS England (NHSE) published its approach to winter and requested that systems review their operational plans and the core assumptions. Further detail on Derby and Derbyshire's NHS Operational Plan – October 2023 to March 2024 is provided in a separate report under this item. Adult social care contributes to this plan, but further information is provided below to outline our expectations of social care during winter:

- Increase support for weekend and out-of-hours Social Care Hospital Discharges.
- Monitor and work with Home Care providers to maximise available homecare capacity.
- Support residential and nursing providers with complex-needs patients.
- Maximise intermediate care capacity at Perth.
- Flex the reablement team to support community or residential requirements.
- Ensure Carelink general and rapid response falls service is responsive to avoid hospital admission and ambulance conveyance.
- Support Team Up urgent community response with any urgent social care requests.

4.5 Flu and COVID-19 - prevalence of seasonal respiratory viruses such as flu, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and COVID-19 increase in autumn and winter. In relation to flu, we usually follow what happens in Australia. Australia has seen a normal flu season and we are therefore not anticipating a significantly more challenging flu season than usual.

A new COVID-19 variant, BA.2.86 has recently been circulating along with other variants, although we believe that local infections have now peaked. The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) reports that there is currently no evidence to suggest that BA.2.86 infection is more likely to make people seriously ill than other currently circulating variants and that vaccination is likely to provide continued protection (UKHSA, 2023¹).

¹ UKHSA (2023) *COVID-19 variants identified in the UK – latest updates*.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-variants-identified-in-the-uk-latest-update#full-publication-update-history>

Vaccination against both flu and COVID-19 remains key to protecting vulnerable populations from severe illness and also in mitigating the pressures faced by the NHS and social care as well as other sectors during winter. An update on the COVID-19 and Flu Autumn/Winter Programme 2023/24 is provided in a separate report for this item.

- 4.6 **Poverty and the cost of living** - in the city we have significant populations with existing health conditions who will be at increased risk during winter particularly, those living with cardiovascular and respiratory conditions. The existing physical and mental health risks faced by these and other vulnerable populations, are further exacerbated during winter due to increasing challenges and living costs.

To mitigate the wider risks, a Cost of Living Coordination Group has been established and meets monthly to implement the Cost of Living Strategy and monitor its impact. There are a range of interventions in place to support communities across the city including:

- Cost of living offer and [website](#)
- Community Hub
- Food 4 Thought
- Warm Welcome network
- Good Neighbours and social prescribing
- Holiday Activity Fund and Household Support Fund
- Access to Benefits and Local Assistance Scheme
- Targeted initiatives (e.g. blankets, air fryers, coats, uniforms)

The Poverty Commission has also established an 'essentials' working group looking at the provision of food, clothing, toiletries etc.

- 4.7 **Housing and homelessness** - There is a range of support available all year round for those homeless or about to become homeless. As the cold weather arrives, we all become more aware of those who may need help.

These services include the Council's Housing Options service who can provide housing advice and assistance, the city's street outreach teams, hostel networks, the Safe Space initiative, Multi Agency Rough Sleepers Hub, and supported housing providers networks.

Rough sleeping numbers remain low but are increasing. Between June and September 2023, the average number of individuals found rough sleeping on any given night was 10.

Sleeping rough increases the risk of cold-related illness and death. A Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) is in place in the city (see Appendix 1). The objectives of the protocol are:

- To ensure that no one dies on the streets due to extreme weather including heat, cold, wind, rain and snow.
- To ensure that every effort is made to engage with individuals accommodated during the extreme hot and cold weather period, to protect them from health harms and prevent a return to rough sleeping.

4.8 **Emerging threats** - the above issues will continue to be risks and challenges to the city through winter. The following issues emerged as particular threats at a winter pressures partnership workshop held on 25th October:

- Homecare and access to homecare – the market is impacted by recruitment and turnover of colleagues.
- Debt and length of time for debt advice.
- Warm Hubs – to further consider availability in areas that most need such provision.
- Increasing demand for temporary accommodation – this is an increasing risk with limited capability to mitigate.
- Essentials – capacity to meet future demands if they grow significantly and how we encourage resilience through more sustainable solutions.
- Being able to identify and reach out to our most vulnerable individuals and communities.

Further work is taking place to address and mitigate these risks where possible.

Public/stakeholder engagement

5.1 None specifically relating to this report.

Other options

6.1 No other options have been considered as a partnership response to winter pressures is considered as essential.

Financial and value for money issues

7.1 None specifically arising from this report.

Legal implications

8.1 None specifically arising from this report.

Socio-Economic implications

9.1 Socio-economic factors influence the experience, and variances in experience, of winter pressures as well as our capability to mitigate the impact of these pressures.

Climate implications

10.1 Climate change is increasing severe weather events. These events impact on the scale and scope of winter pressures.

Other significant implications

- 11.1 Equality impact assessments are undertaken to inform appropriate strategies and interventions.

This report has been approved by the following people:

Role	Name	Date of sign-off
Legal Finance Service Director(s)	Heather Greenan, Director of Corporate Management	01/11/2023
Report sponsor Other(s)	Robyn Dewis, Director of Public Health Alison Wynn, Assistant Director of Public Health	01/11/2023

Background papers:	
List of appendices:	Derby Severe Weather Emergency Provision for Rough Sleepers