

30th September 2022

Preparing for Winter pressures in health and social care: increasing community capacity transformation programme

Purpose

1. To feedback to members from the first meeting of the refocused Care Action Committee and the work to increase community-based capacity to help ease pressures on hospitals ensuring timely discharges from hospital, and to provide an update on the programme. The Report also highlights a number of other recent reports reflecting pressures in both health and social care.

Background

2. At the Executive Board meeting on 29th July, members discussed the proposal to establish a programme, working jointly with the NHS, to a '*shared endeavour*' approach to integrated working in responding to current pressures and preparing for Winter pressures. Members supported an approach to capacity building which specifically focuses on increasing recruitment and retention, and the creation of additional step down to recover beds across Wales in readiness for *winter pressures*.
3. The aim of the Increasing Community Capacity transformation programme is: a joint endeavour, between the NHS, Local Government and other partners to create additional community capacity/ 1000 beds or Equivalent Community Capacity up to April 2023
4. A governance structure has been established to oversee the programme and local government, through WLGA, Solace Cymru, HR Directors Network and ADSS Cymru are represented on a variety of groups supporting this work.

Increasing Community Capacity Transformation Programme (1000 beds or equivalent community capacity)

5. The increasing community capacity transformation programme is being overseen by the Care Action Committee, chaired by the Minister for Health and with local government represented by Cllr Andrew Morgan, Cllr Llinos Medi and Cllr Huw David. Its aim is to identify and agree strategic matters (including any potential risks and mitigations) relating to the Community Care Capacity Building programme, ensuring that it enables the Steering group meeting to develop and oversee plans that deliver its objectives.
6. Its objectives are to: (I) Provide strategic leadership and where appropriate decision-making to the Steering group through identifying the 'what and why'

(ii) to guide the delivery of the programme through its governance structure; (iii) Ensure appropriate reporting back from the meeting to both the WLGA Executive Board and NHS Leadership Board; (iv) Receive progress updates, including quantitative assessment of progress against plans, on the work of the Steering group specifically in the delivery on this programme and 'how' the programme is being delivered in partnership; and (v) Lead on communication and engagement at a national level to support delivery.

7. Work has commenced on a five-themed approach which can be summarised as:
 - Optimising hospital care targeting specific reasons for hospital-based delays, for example through consistently effective daily board rounds at Ward level;
 - Increasing community bed base to deliver a "Step Down to Recover" model;
 - Maximise the use of care/nursing home capacity;
 - A targeted plan to increase workforce across the sectors to deliver a sustainable service model to support people to live independently at home; and including step up support for hospital admission avoidance, where appropriate and
 - Expansion of the Third Sector home support services.
8. In taking forward this work, there are ongoing discussions about systems pressures and demands, primarily at the regional level. Fortnightly meetings are being held between the Directors of Social Services and an equivalent health representative with the programme team to review progress. While all regions have plans and are planning for winter pressures, these regular meetings help focus discussions on what work can be done more quickly and speedy actions to meet the aims of this programme, both locally and regionally. It will still be for the regions to act too, for example, increasing capacity in step down to recover mode.
9. There is also recognition that this work overlaps with other work ongoing primarily within the NHS, e.g. the primary care programme and the 'six goals for urgent and emergency care' (which are: Coordination, planning and support for people at greater risk of needing urgent or emergency care; Signposting to the right place, first time; Access to clinically safe alternatives to hospital admission; Rapid response in a physical or mental health crisis; Optimal hospital care following admission; Home-first approach and reduce risk of readmission). While there is little awareness of these programmes across local government, this will need to be addressed so people can better understand the wider picture and work ongoing to also deal with pressures through the NHS.
10. Officers have been informed there is no additional funding from Welsh Government for this work; the work will need to be funded via the Regional Integration Fund (RIF) and core budgets.

Health and social care system pressures: recently published reports

11. On 28th September, the Welsh NHS Confederation published a briefing entitled, "*"It's not just a crisis, it's a national emergency"*": Addressing the challenges in social care".¹ The briefing is based on a survey of over 50 NHS leaders in Wales undertaken by the Confederation. The headline findings highlighted are:
 - 100 per cent of the 50+ NHS Wales leaders surveyed agreed there is a crisis in the social care workforce, with a subsequent impact on patient care and safety.
 - Many of the respondents said pressures in the care sector are driving urgent care demand, with a lack of social care capacity having an impact on the ability to tackle the elective care backlog.
 - 94 per cent of those surveyed agreed the crisis is worse than it was 12 months ago and almost nine in 10 expect the situation to deteriorate over winter.
12. The survey was undertaken in August to understand how these system-wide challenges are playing out on the NHS frontline and asked members to describe the impact that staff shortages and a lack of capacity in social care are having on NHS services, as well as what effective solutions may look like. We received responses from over 50 NHS chairs, vice chairs, chief executives, executive directors and assistant directors from across Wales.
13. Based on their findings, the Welsh NHS Confederation is calling on the Welsh Government to:
 - (i) Provide sustainable funding for social care with a fully funded pay rise to enable recruitment and retention, alongside greater overall investment and career progression opportunities.
 - (ii) Support better integration between health and social services to achieve seamless care and support for the patient.
 - (iii) Provide sufficient, ring-fenced funding and longer-term investment to transform out of hospital care and allow and long-term service development.
 - (iv) Publish locality based delayed discharge data so there is clear information and evidence of the current issues in providing packages of care to people leaving hospital.
 - (v) Introduce performance measures that focus on quality-based outcomes, prevention, community services and whole-system collaboration.
14. While the WLGA would support the 'calls' made of Welsh Government, and indeed have raised many of these issues on numerous occasions, it may have been preferable for such a survey to be conducted across health and social care to assess views across the whole system rather than focus on one element. Many of the same challenges are facing both health and social care, with the primary issue being workforce challenges, which is impacting across

¹ ["It's not just a crisis, it's a national emergency": Addressing the challenges in social care | NHS Confederation](#)

the system. In response, the WLGA released a press statement included at Appendix A.

15. However, some aspects of the report will require further discussion as they have not been raised or will not be addressed through the community capacity transformation programme, for example, the report states, “Beyond delayed discharge, the most significant impact of the lack of adequate capacity in social care cited by healthcare leaders surveyed was around emergency department (ED) pressures and ambulance waiting times. Over 80 per cent said social care capacity had either a very significant or significant impact in driving urgent care demand, with 85 per cent saying it has a very significant or significant impact on EDs, and 81 per cent saying it has an impact on ambulance waiting times.”
16. While the WLGA recognises many of the challenges in social care as identified in the Welsh NHS Confederation report, there is concern that the report reinforces the narrative that the majority of the challenges being experienced by the NHS is because of the challenges in social care, rather than reflecting pressures across the whole system. The spokespeople will be seeking a meeting with the Chair of the Welsh NHS Confederation to discuss the findings of the survey in more detail and express their concerns.
17. On the same day, the publication of a number of other reports also reflected significant pressures in the NHS:
 - The Annual Report of Health Inspectorate Wales 2021-22² identifies sustained pressure on emergency care, staffing concerns, risks around managing patient safety and the accessibility of face-to-face appointments. “Overall, we have found the quality of care provided across Wales has been of a good standard. However, through our work we identified healthcare services continue to be under intense pressure from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic”. Given concerns about access to primary care and in particular GPs, the report states, “The issue of access to face-to face GP appointments was prevalent. People told us that they could not always get appointments when they needed them, and found it difficult in some areas to access practices by phone”.
 - Reported in the Nursing Times, the RCN have shared their annual report on the state of the nursing workforce which reflects that “nurse vacancies across the NHS in Wales are predicted to have jumped a concerning 69% in just one year”. Based on a combination of Freedom of Information requests, trust emails and committee papers from health boards, RCN Wales believes there are currently 2,900 registered nurse vacancies in NHS Wales, a rise of 69% on 2021.
 - BMA Cymru has also reported ‘NHS Wales in dangerous and precarious state’. ³ This article also reflects that The Royal College of Physicians (RCP) staff census showed there was pressure across Welsh hospitals. It

² [Wales NHS remains under 'intense pressure' - HIW report - BBC News](#)

³ [NHS Wales in dangerous and precarious state - BMA Cymru - BBC News](#)

revealed just 36% of advertised consultant physician posts in Wales were filled in 2021, and that in 71% of unsuccessful appointments, it was because there were no applicants. BMA Cymru chairwoman Iona Collins said staff shortages led to delayed surgeries, longer waiting lists and "despair for patients"., also calling for a workforce strategy from Welsh Government to tackle the workforce crisis.

18. It is clear that there are significant pressures across the health and social care system and the WLGA and councils are committed to tackling the challenges in social care however, recruiting more people into the workforce challenge is extremely challenging at this time, as well as in retaining staff. However, it is unclear how this challenge can be overcome at the level required without better terms and conditions and pay for social care staff. The Spokespeople have consistently raised these issues with Ministers and will raise again at their next bilateral meeting.
19. It is also proposed that health and social will be an agenda for the next fortnightly meetings between leaders and Welsh Government Ministers and members may wish to consider writing to the Health and Social Care Ministers ahead of the meeting highlighting any specific issues they may wish to discuss.

Recommendations

20. Members are asked to:
 - a) Note and comment on the content of the report, including the update from the increasing community capacity transformation programme
 - b) Support the Health and Social Services Spokespeople seeking a meeting with the Welsh NHS Confederation
 - c) Share any specific issues they may wish to raise with Ministers ahead of the next fortnightly meeting

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Appendix A

“Rhaid i ddatrys heriau o fewn iechyd a gofal cymdeithasol fod yn ymdrech ar y cyd”, meddai CLILC

Ymatebodd llefarwyr CLILC dros lechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol heddiw i adroddiad Conffederasiwn GIG Cymru sy'n amlygu'r heriau o fewn gofal cymdeithasol.

Dyweddodd y Cynghorydd Llinos Medi (Ynys Môn):

“Mae llywodraeth leol wedi bod yn glir erstalwm bod angen cefnogaeth hir-dymor gynaliadwy ar fyrdwr i'r sector gofal cymdeithasol. Croeswyd cyllid ychwanegol gan Lywodraeth Cymru y llynedd. Ond mae'n hanfodol fod cyllidebau yn cadw i fyny â galw cynyddol ac i gwrdd ag anghenion sy'n fwyfwy cymhleth.”

“O ran reciwtio a chadw staff, mae cyngorau wedi gweithio'n rhagweithiol. Fodd bynnag, mae heriau gweithlu sylweddol yn dal i fod ar draws y sector gyhoeddus, yn nodedig felly yn y GIG ble mae prinder meddygon teulu, staff ambiwlans a doctoriaid yn effeithio ar ddarparu gwasanaethau. Bydd rhaid teithio cryn bellter eto cyn y bydd staff gofal cymdeithasol yn derbyn yr un telerau ac amodau cyflogaeth a'u cydweithwyr yn y GIG. Dyma anghysondeb sydd ond yn ychwanegu at yr her o reciwtio a chadw staff. Rydyn ni'n gweithio'n agos gyda'r GIG i ddelio â heriau o ran y gweithlu ac i sicrhau ein bod ni'n defnyddio ein capasiti yn effeithiol.”

Dyweddodd y Cynghorydd Huw David OBE, (Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr)

“Mae'r galw cynyddol a phwysau ychwanegol ar Wasanaethau Plant hefyd yn sylweddol. Mae cyllidebau a chapasiti'r gweithlu yn cael eu amharu gan anhawsterau gwirioneddol o ran canfod llefydd addas ar gyfer y rheiny sydd angen bod mewn gofal neu wedi eu diogelu. Dim ond ychwanegu at y galw am gefnogaeth y gwnaiff yr argyfwng costau byw. Gwasanaethau ataliol ac ymyrraeth gynnar yw prif ffocws llywodraeth leol, gan weithio'n agos gyda gwasanaethau gofal sylfaenol a chymunedol, i hefyd leihau'r galw am ymyriadau brys ac argyfngoi.”

Dyweddodd y Cynghorydd Charlie McCoubrey (Conwy):

“Rhaid i fynd i'r afael â'r nifer o heriau systemig o fewn y sectorau iechyd a gofal cymdeithasol fel eu gilydd fod yn ymdrech ar y cyd. Mae gofal cymdeithasol yn gweithio'n agos ar lefelau lleol a rhanbarthol gyda'r GIG i helpu i daclo pwyseddau o fewn y system. Mae'n siomedig mai ond arweinwyr o fewn y GIG y cafodd eu harolygu ac na fu 'dull tîm' o ran ymgynghori a'r holl system.”

“Ni all yr un rhan o'r system iechyd a gofal cymdeithasol ddatrys y materion yma ar ei phen ei hun. Bydd llywodraeth leol yn parhau i weithio'n agos gyda Llywodraeth Cymru, y GIG, a phartneriaid eraill gyda brys ac o ddifrif i ddatrys y materion yma.”

-DIWEDD-

“Addressing health and social care challenges must be a shared endeavour”, says WLGA

The WLGA’s spokespersons for Health and Social Care have today respond to a Welsh NHS Confederation report which highlights challenges faced in social care.

Councillor Llinos Medi, (Anglesey) said:

“As local government has long been clear, the hard-working social care sector urgently needs sustainable long-term support. Last year’s extra funding by Welsh Government was welcomed. But it is essential that budgets keep pace with rising demand and to meet increasingly complex needs.

“Councils have been proactive in working to recruit and retain more staff. However there remains significant workforce challenges across the public sector, notably in the NHS where a lack of GPs, ambulance staff, nurses and doctors are also impeding its provision.

“There is some way to go before social care staff have the same terms and conditions of employment as their NHS colleagues. This anomaly only adds to the challenge of recruitment and retention. We are working closely with the NHS to address workforce challenges and making sure we use the capacity we do have to best effect.”

Councillor Huw David OBE, (Bridgend) said:

“Also significant is the increased demand and pressures in Children’s Services. Severe difficulties in finding appropriate placements for those who need to be in care or safeguarded is also impacting budgets and the capacity of the workforce. The Cost-of-Living crisis is likely to only further fuel demand for support.

“Local government is keen that we can focus on preventative and early intervention services, working closely with primary and community care services, to also hold off the need for emergency and crisis interventions.”

Councillor Charlie McCoubrey, (Conwy) said:

“Addressing the many systemic challenges in both the health and social care sectors must be a shared endeavour. Social care works closely at local and regional levels with the NHS to help tackle pressures in the system. It is disappointing that only NHS leaders were surveyed and that a ‘team approach’ was not undertaken to consult the entire system.

“No part of the health and care system can resolve these issues alone. Local government will continue to work closely with Welsh Government, the NHS, and other partners with urgency and in earnest to resolve these issues.”

-ENDS-