

Brighton & Hove City Council

Scrutiny Report Template

Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Agenda Item 22

Subject: Sussex Winter Plan 2024-25

Date of meeting: 20 November 2024

Report of: Chair of the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer: Name: Giles Rossington, Policy, Partnerships & Scrutiny
Team Manager
Email: giles.rossington@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

Key Decision: No

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

1.1 Integrated Care Systems (e.g. the Sussex Integrated Care Partnership) are required to produce annual winter plans. Winter plans aim to ensure that the local health and care system effectively manages additional demand across the winter months.

1.2 The Sussex winter plan is currently being developed. The strategic approach underpinning the plan is being presented to the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) for information and comment (see Appendix 1). A follow-up report will come to the HOSC in spring/summer 2025 to update the committee on actual system performance over the winter period and on lessons learnt.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee notes and comments on the contents of this report.

3. Context and background information

3.1 The overall purpose of the Sussex-wide winter plan is to ensure that the system is able to effectively manage the capacity and demand pressures

anticipated during the winter period to meet the needs of the local population. The winter planning period covers the period November 2024 to April 2025. The plan should ensure that the local systems remain resilient and are able to manage demand surge effectively, maintain patient safety, and support delivery of the relevant business plan objectives and locally agreed system improvements during this period.

3.2 Health and care systems typically experience increased demand pressures during the winter months due to a number of factors including:

- Seasonal illnesses (e.g. flu, norovirus)
- Covid 19
- Extreme weather (e.g. falls in icy conditions)
- Exacerbation of respiratory illnesses and a range of long-term conditions due to cooler weather
- Ongoing impact from the cost-of-living crisis affecting the most vulnerable in the local population to keep well

3.3 Health and care systems have been planning systemically for winter surge pressures for a number of years, and typically a key part of this process is assessing how well the previous year's plans met demand, and using learning from this to inform the subsequent year's planning.

3.4 The definitive Sussex winter plan has not yet been agreed, and is in any case a detailed document which addresses a wide range of operational matters rather than a strategic plan. Appendix 1 outlines a high-level approach to winter planning agreed by system partners.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

4.1 Not applicable to this report for information.

5. Community engagement and consultation

5.1 None undertaken for this information report.

6. Financial implications

6.1 Any additional costs resulting from the Sussex-Wide Winter Plan will need to be met from within identified resources across NHS Sussex and the Council.

6.2 Winter pressures cause significant financial strain across Health & Social Care. Current budget forecasting accounts for anticipated increased demand over this period. However, budget forecasts may be subject to variation later in the year due to the unpredictable nature of the impact on services during the winter.

Finance Officer consulted: Jamiu Ibraheem Date: 13/11/2024

7. Legal implications

7.1 The Council's Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee has delegated to it the statutory responsibility of reviewing and scrutinising matters relating to the planning, provision and operation of health services in Brighton & Hove.

7.2 While the Winter Plan appended to this Report is a high level strategic plan as opposed to a proposal to make specific changes to existing healthcare provision, it nonetheless has potential to impact on the lives of the people of Brighton & Hove. As a result, this Committee is invited to consider the appendix and if it wishes to make comment on the matters reported on.

Name of lawyer consulted: Victoria Simpson Date consulted 11/11/24

8. Equalities implications

8.1 The aims of effective collaborative winter plan arrangements are to ensure that local health and care systems are able to continue to deliver the services that have been developed to meet the needs of the local population. Cold weather disproportionately affects our most vulnerable residents and the Sussex Wide Winter Plan seeks to ensure that resources are targeted to support those at greatest risk. Specific services will be further developed to support delivery of the Plan during the winter period and equality impact assessments will be undertaken to support the development of those specific services.

9. Sustainability implications

9.1 The Sussex-Wide winter plan considers how best to use NHS and local authority resources across Sussex in order to cope with seasonal demand surges for health and care services. Any negative carbon impacts of these plans (e.g. through people potentially having to travel further from home to access services where local capacity is stretched) need to be considered. However this needs to be balanced against the risks to individuals of not being able to access appropriate health or care.

10. Health and Wellbeing Implications:

10.1 Health and wellbeing implications are addressed in Appendix 1.

11. Conclusion

11.1 Members are asked to note information provided by the Sussex Integrated Care Board on Sussex health and care system planning for winter 2024/25.

Supporting Documentation

1. Appendices

1. Information provided by Sussex Integrated Care Board on system winter planning 2024-25.