

# Scottish Government Health and Social Care Winter Overview 2021-2022



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## Foreword



Our health and care system is under more pressure than at any point in the pandemic and this winter will be one of the most challenging it has faced. That's why we have outlined a package of over £300 million of investment in NHS and care services this winter to help address these pressures.

This overview summarises the actions being taken through our winter preparations, based on four key principles: maximising capacity; supporting staff wellbeing; supporting effective system flow, and; improving outcomes.

We are **maximising capacity** through investment in new staffing, resources, facilities and services.

To **support staff wellbeing** we are ensuring that staff can continue to work safely and effectively with access to timely physical, practical and emotional wellbeing support.

To **support effective system flow** we are taking actions to improve planned discharge from hospital, social work assessment, provide interim care and increase access to care in a range of community settings to ensure that people are cared for as close to home as possible.

Finally, everything that we do must be in support of **improving outcomes**. I am confident that through our collective investment in people, capacity and systems to deliver the right care in the right setting, we can improve outcomes for those of us who need to use our health and social care services.

This Health and Social Care Winter Overview, in conjunction with the Adult Social Care Winter Preparedness Plan, sets out how we will work collectively to respond to these unprecedented challenges.

We can all play our part to as far as possible to protect ourselves, others, and our health service. Our health and care staff have been remarkable throughout the pandemic, and we can help them by encouraging even greater take-up of COVID-19 and flu vaccination this winter.

I understand how difficult it is for our health and social care teams as they work tirelessly to deliver treatment and care to people in their communities and I want to thank them for their dedication and commitment to the people of Scotland.

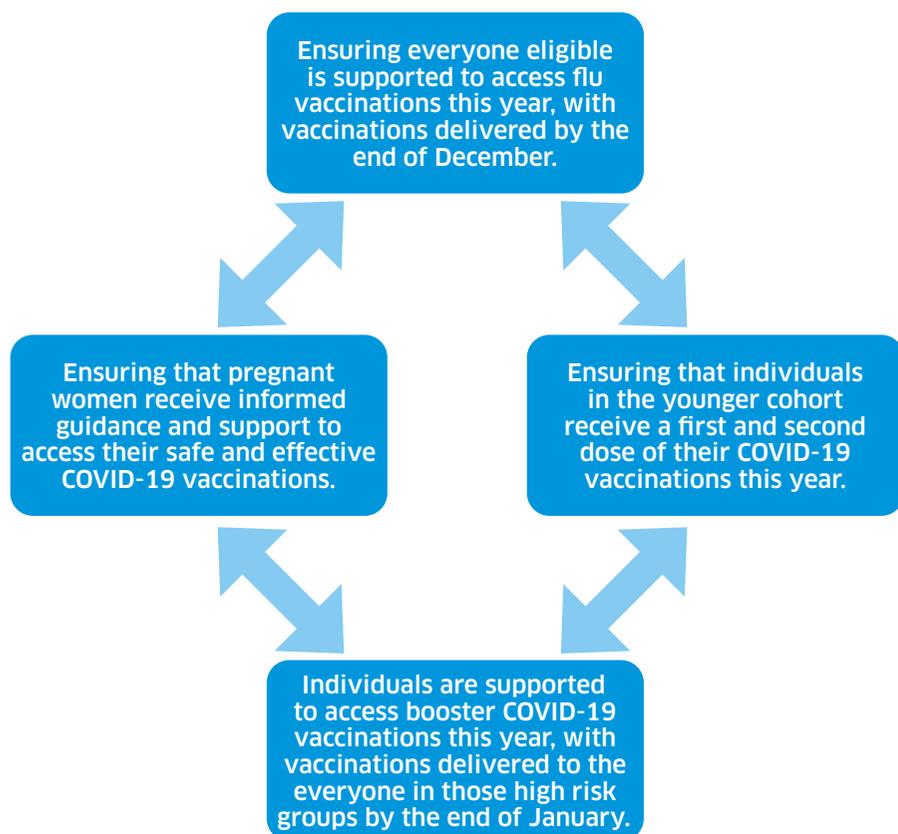
**Humza Yousaf MSP**  
**Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care**

# Protecting the public from the direct impact of COVID-19 and other winter viruses

## Supporting high uptake of vaccination

The effective delivery of the seasonal flu vaccine and COVID-19 vaccine form a critical part of our response to the potential pressures our NHS will face this winter. It remains crucial that everyone who is offered a vaccination takes up the offer: by ensuring that everyone eligible to receive a vaccine does so, we reduce the burden on the NHS caused directly by severe COVID-19 disease and other winter viruses.

### Aims



### How We Will Deliver This

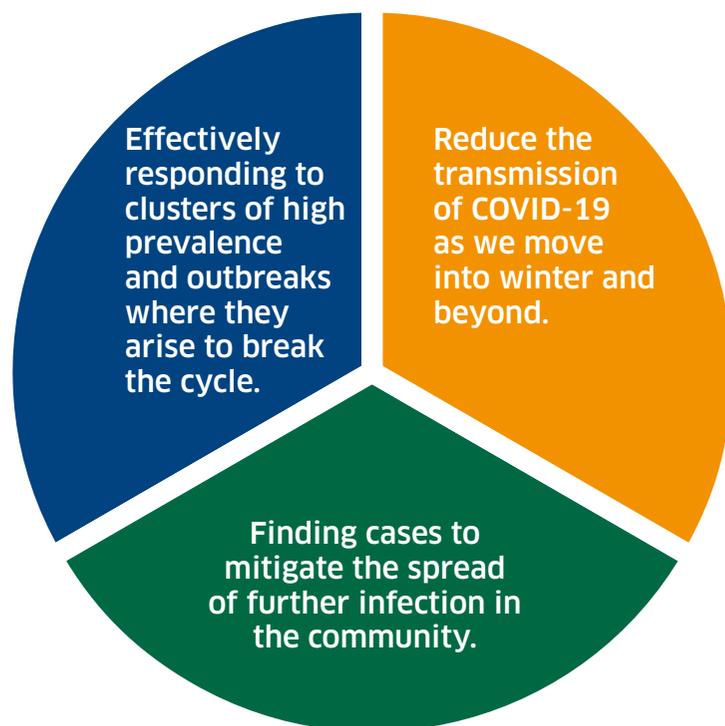
- We have implemented a COVID-19 Vaccination Certification scheme to reduce the spread of the virus and encourage younger people to receive the vaccine.
- We are providing information, utilising media opportunities and implementing staff awareness training seminars to reinforce messages and increase uptake of the vaccine in pregnant women.
- We will run a national campaign to encourage everyone eligible to get vaccinated against seasonal flu, which in turn will reduce the pressure on health services.
- We will continue to closely monitor day-to-day uptake, actively working with Health Boards, supporting targeted action for those who have not yet been vaccinated and for newly eligible groups such as 12-15's and 16-17 year olds.
- We will monitor the progress and delivery of the seasonal flu vaccination programme against planned volumes.
- We will continue to work with Health Boards and expert stakeholders to ensure those with one or more protected characteristics, and others who may experience barriers, are supported to access the vaccine.

## Using Test & Protect to stop the spread of coronavirus

Scotland's overall pandemic strategy is set out in the updated Strategic Framework, which outlines the government's intent to suppress the virus to a level consistent with alleviating its harms, while we recover and rebuild for a better future.

Test & Protect remains an important ongoing baseline measure, and comprises access to PCR testing for people with symptoms, contact tracing and advice on isolation dependent on age and vaccination status, and a range of asymptomatic testing programmes using rapid antigen tests. This includes a universal offer to enable the population to regularly test to reduce the risk of spreading the virus.

### Aims



### How We Will Deliver This

- We will continue to provide Whole Population Testing for anyone with symptoms through Test & Protect.
- We will proactively find cases by testing contacts and testing in outbreaks.
- We will protect the vulnerable and prevent outbreaks in high risk settings by supporting routine testing.
- We will support the delivery of multiplex testing in clinical testing across health boards to support infection prevention and control, rapid patient placement, and indicate treatment where appropriate.
- We will provide testing for direct patient care, to diagnose and to treat, and to support safe patient care as NHS services restart.
- We will continue to undertake surveillance to understand the disease, track prevalence, understand transmission, and monitor key sectors.

## Promoting compliance with baseline protective measures

Baseline precautionary measures remain essential to suppress the virus whilst continuing to keep sectors and the economy open, especially during the winter months.

### Aims

Increased and consistent compliance in the wearing face coverings.

Awareness of the importance of avoiding crowded places, keeping a safe distance, meeting outdoors, good hand hygiene, regular testing, self-isolating if you display symptoms, and working from home wherever possible.

Increased awareness of the importance of good ventilation in indoor settings.

### How We Will Deliver This

- We will regularly review the regulations to ensure they are necessary and proportionate, maintaining public confidence.
- We will continue to use traditional and social media campaigns to reinforce messages about the requirement to wear face coverings in most indoor public settings.
- We will continue to support high risk sectors to improve their ventilation and air quality so that they can make their settings safer, supported by advice and guidance.
- We will implement the Grant Fund package of £25K to support small to medium sized businesses to improve poorly ventilated premises.
- We will continue targeted communications and marketing campaigns on what good ventilation looks like and how to achieve it.
- We will regularly review the baseline measures to assess whether the current approach is effective, and will use traditional and social media campaigns to reinforce key protective messages.

# Supporting our staff to deliver high quality care, in the right place, at the right time

## Expanding the Workforce

Whilst overall workforce numbers in the NHS have never been higher, increased demand for Health and Social Care services is creating significant workforce capacity challenges. The consequences are seen beyond hospital or GP services and affect all areas of health and social care, including care provided at home. To support our health and social care partners effectively over the winter period, we are therefore:

Expanding the Workforce	
Aims	How we Will Deliver This
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Investing in new recruitment and improved recruitment processes – so that health and social care employers have the staff they need to prioritise and continue running safe and high quality services – and deliver these where and when they are most needed.</b></li> <li>• <b>Bringing in new workforce capacity to support clinical services – so that health and social care services can continue to provide the safe, timely, and effective care that everyone in Scotland expects and deserves.</b></li> <li>• <b>Putting in place a range of targeted workforce measures to help proactively manage current system pressures, working closely with NHS Scotland, local authorities and health and social care partnerships.</b></li> <li>• <b>Reduce avoidable delays to patient discharge in hospitals, providing increased access to assessment and bridging care, and providing added support to care homes.</b></li> <li>• <b>Ensure people have the most effective care according to changing needs</b></li> <li>• <b>Provide rapid responses, where it is right for these to be managed in people’s communities – alleviating pressure on GPs and the Scottish Ambulance Service.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing £1 million of in-year funding across NHS Scotland to build capacity within recruitment teams, alongside an offer by national health boards to provide mutual-aid to territorial boards to manage new volume recruitment.</li> <li>• Providing up to £15 million investment for territorial NHS Boards to recruit 1,000 Agenda for Change (AfC) staff at bands 2, 3, and 4 over the next 3 to 4 months.</li> <li>• We have approved funding to extend the my jobs Scotland recruitment website until March 2022 to all third and independent sector organisations, which will mean that all social care vacancies can be advertised at no additional cost to providers on one platform.</li> <li>• Making funds available to Health and Social Care Partnerships to accelerate recruitment of multi-disciplinary teams (MDTs) to support general practices.</li> <li>• Additional funding of £48 million will be made available to enable employers to provide an uplift to the hourly rate of pay for staff offering Direct Care within Adult Social Care. This means the hourly rate will rise to a minimum £10.02 per hour.</li> <li>• Encouraging registrants on the professional regulators’ emergency COVID-19 registers to return to the workforce.</li> <li>• Providing national marketing support for recruitment into band 5 posts across the territorial Health Boards, notably for nurses providing care at home.</li> <li>• Providing new recurring funding of £1 million to develop capacity within recruitment teams to support international recruitment – recognising the additional workload this will bring to Boards.</li> <li>• Asking NHS Boards nationally to recruit at least 200 registered nurses from overseas by March 2022.</li> <li>• Making a national offer to healthcare students – including nursing, midwifery, AHP students and undergraduate medics – of three or six month Less Than Full Time Fixed Term Contracts, with their nearest NHS Board.</li> <li>• We are investing an additional £20 million covering the remainder of this financial year to establish new MDTs and strengthen existing ones.</li> </ul>

## Supporting the health and wellbeing of our staff

Our NHS staff have been under considerable pressure for many months. They came into this pandemic as a tough winter was coming to an end, and have been working tirelessly since then. We are already investing £8 million to provide enhanced wellbeing support locally and nationally. As we now face another challenging winter we will further build on the work already delivered, which is why we have provided a further £4 million to support the wellbeing of the NHS workforce this winter.

We have listened closely and carefully to staff and their representative bodies to understand where the pressures are, and what actions can be taken to mitigate the resulting impacts on staff. Now, more than ever, it is critical that staff look after their wellbeing and take the rest breaks and leave to which they are entitled, as well as being given time to access national and local wellbeing resources at work.

The National Wellbeing Hub provides a range of self-care and wellbeing resources for all staff, unpaid carers, volunteers and their families to enhance personal resilience, and signposts to relevant mental health and support services. This includes the Workforce Specialist Service – which offers confidential mental health assessment and treatment for regulated health and social care professionals; digital apps to help with stress, anxiety and sleep; and online ‘Coaching for Wellbeing’. A National Wellbeing Helpline for the health and social care workforce (0800 111 4191) provides a compassionate and empathic listening service on a 24/7 basis, as well as advice, signposting and onward referral to local services if required and with a caller’s consent.



### Practical measures such as providing food and drink on shift

We will work with partners to investigate what further support can be provided to staff working on the frontline (food, drink, transport etc.).



### Well rested staff who are able to provide outstanding care

We will invest in further local rest and break facilities.

We will work closely with the Regulatory and Professional Bodies to support staff working under extreme pressure and in difficult circumstances.



### Psychological support for staff during this challenging period

We will ensure that the resources that are already in operation are understood and well signposted, and encourage staff to take breaks and to access support.

We will provide materials to support staff dealing with abusive and aggressive behaviour and a national marketing campaign making the public aware that such behaviour will not be tolerated.



### Healthy staff with access to wellbeing support

We will invest a range of emotional supports for our staff over the winter period.

# Increasing capacity to meet demand and maintain high quality integrated health and social care services throughout autumn and winter

## Urgent & Emergency Care

Demand on the urgent and emergency care has been, and continues to be very significant, mirroring levels only experienced during pre-Covid winter months. The continued access to urgent and emergency services will continue to be a priority in our health service.

### Aims



### How We Will Deliver This

- Continue to take forward the Redesign of Urgent Care into its second year, which is backed by £23 million, and will provide the fastest and most appropriate care for people when they really need it by refining access for public to clinical triage and assessment offering virtual consultations wherever possible and improve access for professional partners through Flow Navigation centres.
- Interface Care, backed by an additional £6 million in this financial year, will deliver high-quality care that safely provides an alternative to hospital admission, or will support early front door discharge, reducing length of stay and increasing bed capacity. The programme will optimise staff and patient experience and will be implemented by early winter.
- Discharge without Delay, backed by an additional £4 million in the current financial year, will improve pathways in, out and through hospital settings, building capacity by reducing inpatient length of stay. Working together with patients, families and/or carers, we can ensure patients are able to be treated in their home where this is appropriate and effective to do so.

## Routine and Planned Care

The impact of addressing the COVID-19 pandemic meant many health and care services had to be suspended or reduced in scope and scale. As a result, there are many people who are waiting longer for the care they need. The effects of the pandemic on NHS capacity continue to be felt therefore maximising capacity over winter is a key priority and is the central aim of the NHS recovery plan.

### Aims

- Ongoing treatment of urgent cases, including cancer patients, is maintained.
- Maximised use of all available capacity to minimise the number of people having treatment postponed over winter.
- Reduction of long delays for treatment.
- Increased level of diagnostic procedures.
- Alternative pathways of care available to provide care closer to home.

### How We Will Deliver This

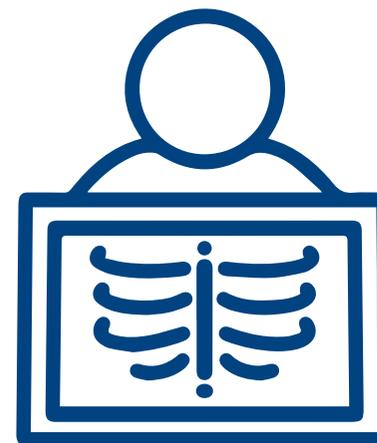
- We will create additional dedicated capacity through the Independent Sector over winter.
- We will use national assets, such as the Golden Jubilee National Hospital, to provide additional procedures across key specialities areas.
- We will continue the redesign of care pathways to ensure best practice is embedded across the country to support increased capacity to accommodate new outpatient appointments in hospital clinics, including diagnostic capacity.
- We will increase ophthalmology activity through the National Eye Centre, which was the first of the National Treatment Centres to go live last winter.



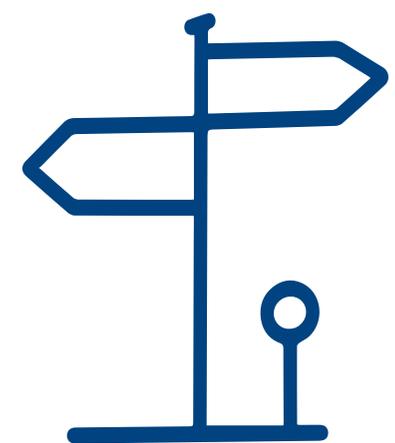
**Clinical  
Prioritisation**



**Maximized NHS  
Capacity**



**Diagnostic  
Services**



**Alternative  
Pathways**

## Social Care

We continue to face significant demand across health and social care services, including demand in the community and in hospital. It is vital that we do all we can to maximise capacity over the winter period through investment in staffing, resources and facilities. Actions are therefore being taken in an integrated and co-ordinated way across the whole system as our Home First approach is not only better for patients, but supports our acute and primary care services too.

The Adult Social Care Winter Preparedness Plan sets out in more detail the range of actions we are taking to support this vital part of the system.

### Aims

- Strengthened capacity of Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDT's).
- Scaled up and enhanced provision of tech-enabled care and home adaptations.
- Scaled up and enhanced provision of rehabilitation, re-ablement and innovative approaches.
- Enhanced Local Authorities' Care at Home and community services capacity to keep people at home when it is safe to do so.

### How We Will Deliver This

- We will strengthen multi-disciplinary working through MDT's made up of staff from professional groups across health and social care. We have announced an additional £20 million for the remainder of this financial year and on a recurring basis to enable both the establishment of new multi-disciplinary teams and strengthening of existing teams.
- We will enhance Care at Home capacity in recognition that we also need to make wider provision to improve access to care at home support in the first place. We have announced an additional £62 million in funding this year and on a recurring basis to enhance care at home capacity. This funding will be dedicated to building capacity in care at home community-based services, by increasing staff hours alongside innovative approaches to care. This will help to address current unmet need, and deal with the current surge in demand and complexity of individual needs.
- We will provide Interim Care placement to ensure everyone gets the right care and treatment at the right time, in the right place, we need to make sure that people who no longer need to be in hospital can move to a more homely setting to complete their recovery and next stage of care. We have announced an additional £40 million for this financial year to fund interim care for patients to enable them to be discharged from hospital.



## Primary Care

### Aims



#### Full recovery of NHS dentistry services

Deliver the full recovery of NHS dentistry services and tackle routine dental care that has been deferred due to the pandemic.



#### Further supporting financial sustainability

Further supporting the financial sustainability of General Practice and our other contractor groups to ensure they remain a viable community healthcare service for years to come.



#### Increased appointment flexibility

Provide increased flexibility around the type of appointment that is offered in the Community to ensure greatest choice for patients and practitioners.



#### Supporting patients in remote and rural areas

Patients are supported in remote and rural areas with appropriate access to NHS community eye care services that have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.



#### Roll out of primary care multi-disciplinary teams (MDT)

Make it easier and quicker for patients to be seen by the right professional in the community, by accelerating the roll out of primary care multi-disciplinary teams (MDT) to support General Practices.



#### Safe, resilient and sustainable out of hours service

Deliver a safe, resilient and sustainable out of hours service across Scotland to ensure patients have access to urgent primary care 24/7.

## How We Will Deliver This

- We will invest additional funding for enhanced dental examinations for children and adults, ensuring that patients receive a thorough preventative catch-up session with their NHS dental team.
- We will target oral health inequalities and child dental services by enhancing the Childsmile Programme in practice and the wider community, as well as other vulnerable groups of patients, including domiciliary care, and unregistered patients.
- We will make additional funding available this financial year to support general practice sustainability, further recruiting pharmacists, nurses, physiotherapists and mental health workers to support general practices and increase the number of appointments with these professionals, supporting effective triage.
- We will invest in the primary care estate, working jointly with RCGP and SGPC to support GPs to make more effective use of social distancing relaxations through updated guidance on access to allow, where appropriate, more face-to-face appointments to take place. This funding will also be used to improve GP telephone systems to allow additional telephone lines and improved triage.
- We will incentivise out of hours working for Final Year General Practitioner Training (GPST3s) to increase staffing over holiday and festive periods.
- We will invest in Out of Hours (OOH's) senior leadership capacity to support service organisation, facilitate pathway development and interface working across the system to release dedicated clinical resource to focus on patient care.
- We will provide additional resources for education within the OOH's workforce to enable the development of the MDT in OOHs, ensuring appropriate ANP/AHP training programmes and support for all OOH's clinicians via small group reflective practice learning.
- We will develop and enhance the OOH's administration support to ensure timely management of non-clinical tasks associated with patient care.
- We will support patients in remote and rural areas having appropriate access to NHS community eye care services that have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

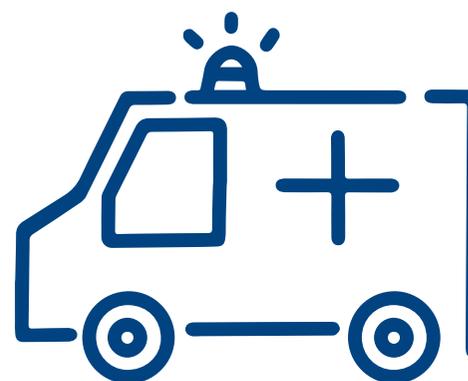
## NHS24 and Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS)

### Aims

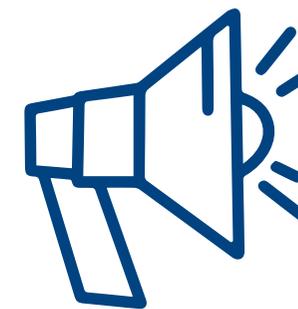
- Reduced call wait times at NHS24, and improved patient outcomes. Deliver on-demand care throughout winter by connecting people to health and care advice, information and support 24/7.
- Provide the highest level of care to patients, through improved Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) response times, supported by reduced clinical handover times at A&E. Ensure care is delivered in the right place: be that at home or by transferring to the appropriate medical setting, to preserve life and promote recovery.

### How We Will Deliver This

- We have recently announced a package of around £40 million to support the Scottish Ambulance Service, and are also providing support to NHS24, totalling £19 million, around their estates and recruitment plans.
  - We will facilitate the provision of partner organisation support for the Scottish Ambulance Service. This includes, where clinically appropriate, deployment of the Red Cross as well as the use of the fire service and the armed forces to drive ambulances under appropriate conditions. Private taxi companies will also be used where needed.
  - We will provide additional support in ambulance control rooms: the deployment of around 100 healthcare students as well as additional senior clinical support. This will assist and speed-up decision-making on best care for callers and this support will be available in control rooms in time for the festive period.
  - We will almost double the number of Hospital Ambulance Liaison Officers (HALOs) at our busiest A&E sites to help work with the hospitals to reduce ambulance turnaround times and get ambulances back out on the road as quickly as possible. These should all be in post by the end of November. For every 1 minute we can reduce daily average hospital turnaround times, we could increase our available resource hours by 21 hours per day, or 147 hours per week.
  - We will deliver additional SAS staff in Highland to reduce on-call requirements in Campbeltown and remove it entirely in Fort William, Kirkwall and Broadford.
  - We will invest an additional £500k in SAS staff-wellbeing initiatives given the pressure the service remains under.
  - We will deliver a new NHS24 call centre opening in Dundee in November, with the second phase operational in advance of the festive season. NHS24 are aiming to reach 677 WTE call handlers and 195 WTE Nurse Practitioners, many of whom will be based in the new centre in Dundee with recruitment for these posts currently underway.
  - We will recruit additional staff for the NHS24 COVID pathway (Target 150 WTE), to ensure adequate resource to meet demand and key performance standards.



## Supporting the public through clear and consistent messaging to make sure they access the right care, in the right place, at the right time



COVID-19 has had, and continues to have, a huge impact on people's lives and our social care services continue to experience unprecedented demand and challenges. We will empower, inform and reassure the public so they can access health and care services in the most appropriate way, helping them to get the best level of care while also alleviating pressures on the health care system.

### Key Public Messages

- Scotland's NHS and care systems will experience significant levels of demand and pressure during winter.
- Together we need to do everything we can to access the care we need in the right place at the right time, so we don't put unnecessary strain on other services.
- In order to deliver a more efficient and safe service for staff and patients, the way health and social care operates has changed.
- Some services may be delivered digitally and these provide benefits around speed, convenience, ease and safety. Face-to-face appointments are always available to people who need them.
- Both General Practice and other primary care services remain open and safe, and have capacity to treat people, including face-to-face appointments for those who need it.
- Do not put off going for routine appointments and potentially creating longer-term health problems, and always contact your GP if you have any symptoms that are causing you concern.
- For a life threatening emergency, continue to call 999 or go to your local A&E.
- If you have still not been vaccinated against coronavirus, it is not too late, and our booster programme is now running alongside the seasonal flu vaccination programme for those who are eligible.

### How We Will Deliver This

- We will deliver a campaign to encourage everyone eligible to get vaccinated against seasonal flu, which in turn will reduce the pressure on health services.
- We will continue to roll out public messaging to encourage COVID-19 vaccine uptake – the single most effective thing people can do to decrease their risk of serious illness from coronavirus.
- We will deliver a campaign relating to key safer behaviours, such as face coverings and ventilation, and use of Test & Protect.
- We will work to raise awareness of the ongoing availability of GP services, so that people continue to use their local GP when they need to.
- We will deliver the annual winter marketing campaign, run by NHS24. Encourage people to take simple steps to prepare for winter and inform the public how and when to make use of resources like NHS Inform and community pharmacists.
- We will create materials will be distributed to health and care services to discourage violent and aggressive behaviour to staff, and make it clear that such behaviour will not be tolerated.
- We will promote options and services which can be used for less serious conditions as an alternative to general practice, including self-care, nhsinform.scot and Pharmacy First.
- We will provide local communications activity by health boards to support urgent care and signpost to local services.

## Financial and Digital Enablers

### Aims

- Support the provision of the right care, in the right place, at the right time, by providing solutions such as NHS Inform to support self-management, reducing late and avoidable A&E presentations and delayed discharge.
- Provide the public with greater choice over how they access appointments through digital solutions, meaning patients can be treated from home where appropriate, thus maximising capacity and improving outcomes.
- Increased service resilience over the winter months to ensure patients can access appropriate medical advice and treatment remotely 24/7 through services such as nhsinform.scot and NHS24.
- Enhanced communications between multi-disciplinary teams (MDT's) using digital and mobile services to provide high quality, integrated care to patients.
- Use financial support effectively to maximise capacity in our hospitals and primary care, reduce delayed discharges, improve pay for social care staff, and ensure those in the community who need support receive effective and responsive care.

### How We Will Deliver This

- The actions set out in this document are supported by a package of over £300 million additional funding in 2021-22.
- We are building in on the successful adoption, and will continue to support Territorial Health Boards to adopt self-monitoring approaches for a range of conditions such as hypertension, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and COVID-19.
- Building on our Programme for Government commitment, we will continue to roll out Near Me video consulting into our care homes and wider social care, facilitating Near Me social work reviews, duty social work and out of hours early adopters as appropriate.
- We will support telecare providers with new guidance to support contingency planning for services over the winter period. This will include supporting proactive telecare, remote working where appropriate and contingency when weather or the pandemic are disrupting installation and responder services.
- We will build upon the success of our digital connectivity in care home programme which invested £1.2 million to provide devices across care homes. We will continue to provide connectivity support and data packages for devices for a further year and we will extend the digital training and leadership package available to residents and professionals.



## Working in partnership across health and social care

This overview adopts a flexible approach, building on new ways of working and retaining the agility and mutual support which we used to respond to the challenge of COVID-19 earlier in the pandemic.

To ensure that a flexible and responsive approach is in place to optimise available capacity, we will continue to use local and national frameworks in our decision-making. Our health boards and social care organisations will ensure that, operating within national frameworks, they monitor what is happening and take local actions where they are needed. It is crucial that we maintain this whole system, agile approach to the mitigation of risks and maintaining of services.

Given the significant financial investment, the strategic priorities will be reviewed and monitored by Scottish Ministers and Officials on a regular basis. The Chief Operating Officer NHS Scotland (COO), supported by Directors, will report to Ministers on the progress being achieved in terms of the delivery of specific initiatives and impact of the work in addressing and ameliorating system pressures throughout the winter period.

It is important to note that this document outlines what has already been done, or is planned. We will continue to work closely with our NHS Boards and partners in response to this winter.





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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at  
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