



SHEFFIELD HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD PAPER

Report of: Councillor Julie Dore and Dr Tim Moorhead

Date: 11 December 2014

Subject: Briefing on Preparedness for Winter and the Ebola Virus

Author of Report: Louisa Willoughby *and others as specified in the report*, 0114 205 7143

Summary:

This paper provides a short update to the Health and Wellbeing Board on the Preparedness for Winter and the Ebola Virus.

Recommendations:

That the Health and Wellbeing Board receives the report and thanks those, especially volunteers, who will support the frail and unwell over the winter period.

Briefing on the Preparedness for Winter

Completed by Steve Ashmore, NHS Sheffield CCG and Lorraine Mitchell, Sheffield City Council

Overview

This briefing summarises the arrangements made by the NHS and Social Care in Sheffield to ensure services are able to respond to the anticipated increased patient need and continue to achieve national standards.

Healthcare

NHS Sheffield CCG has £3.77m funding available to support preparedness for winter over 2014/15. This national resilience funding provides the local economy with welcome additional resources to target admissions avoidance and streamline admission processes, profiling work across the week and days, to enable the better management of patient flow, including at weekends and peak holiday periods, so that patient need is met and national standards, including the four hour maximum wait in A&E, are met.

Our plan ensures the resilience of the existing system working with our large provider partners. However we are also supporting a number of innovative projects with a more diverse range of providers. These schemes will pilot and test small, often community based, projects that should keep people well in the community and reduce flows to GPs and Hospital care developing or not. The programme represents a balance of investment across the health and social care system. Initiatives are complementary to ensure 'flow' through the system.

Since this process was completed further additional funds have been allocated to Sheffield Teaching and Sheffield Children's Hospitals by NHS England. This funding is specifically focused on achieving the 4-hour Accident and Emergency Target. It is possible that there may be some further additional funding for Mental Health Services but we have not yet been informed of any final decision.

Surge Planning Group

It is important that all organisations across the health care system are sighted on each other's winter plans and that we understand the interdependencies across the system. To facilitate this the Surge Planning Group, a sub-group of the System Resilience Group, chaired by the Sheffield CCG Medical Director, Dr Zak McMurray, has been established. This group, and the use of resources described above, will ensure that the health and social care system in Sheffield is as well prepared as possible for the impact of winter on the health of our population.

Social Care

- There is a joint plan between Sheffield City Council, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals Primary and Community Services [PCS], Sheffield Health and Social Care Trust and Continuing Health Care [CHC] that can be activated in a business continuity incident to ensure that the organisations work together to support existing service users and other vulnerable people. This is called the Local Area Continuity Team [LACT]. Some new staff have been recruited to support potential need over the winter.
- All care homes have individual contingency plans in the event of an enforced emergency closure or evacuation. In the event of a home closing under such circumstances the 'serious incident process' would be implemented and all sections would be involved in facilitating appropriate care.
- New developments on prevention and early intervention are being introduced such as Community Support Workers who liaise with GPs to identify vulnerable people within the community and to refer them to support if needed.
- Community Support Workers will be managing a network of volunteers to support frail and vulnerable older people (identified through their work) who have no access to formal or family support. If we have heavy snow or prolonged periods of severe weather, people on our at risk register are contacted to find out if they have enough food, medication and that their heating is working and on. Where this is not the case a named volunteer is dispatched to take whatever is required.
- The Drugs and Alcohol Coordination Team in Sheffield City Council requires all commissioned providers to have up to date business continuity plans which as a minimum should cover severe weather events. They work closely with pharmacies to ensure service can be provided through alternative routes should business as usual be affected by winter weather, sickness etc. A robust communication strategy is established within plans and all agreements are signed off by the Head of Medicines Management, NHS.
- Clear guidance is available to the general public on a range of websites as to preventative measures to take during winter months. Further information is made available to advise the public should there be sustained activity which affects day to day living and services available. This includes links to information from the Department of Health and the NHS.

Briefing on the Ebola Virus

Completed by Ruth Granger, Health Protection Manager, Public Health, Sheffield City Council

The current situation

There is currently an outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease in West Africa. Three countries are chiefly affected: Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. There have also been a small number of cases in healthcare workers who have treated Ebola patients in the USA and Spain.

Ebola is a rare but serious viral infection. People in the UK are at low risk of Ebola, as the virus is only transmitted by direct contact with the blood or bodily fluids of an infected person, showing symptoms of the disease. There have been no cases of Ebola virus disease being contracted in the UK.

It remains unlikely but not impossible that people infected in Guinea, Liberia or Sierra Leone could arrive in the UK. These countries have exit screening at airports to ensure that individuals who are unwell do not board flights. The UK has also introduced entry screening for people arriving from these three countries. However, as the time between infection and symptoms first appearing can be up to 21 days, it is possible that individuals returning from affected countries could develop symptoms up to three weeks after arrival.

In summary:

- The risk of Ebola arriving in the UK is **low**.
- Transmission of Ebola from person to person is only by direct contact with the blood or body fluids of an ill person with the disease. The virus is **not** spread by the airborne route.
- The time between infection and symptoms first appearing (incubation period) of Ebola ranges from two to 21 days.
- People arriving back in the UK having travelled from any of the **affected countries**, and who are free of symptoms, are **not infectious** and there should be **no restrictions** on their school attendance or normal activities.
- Only people with symptoms of Ebola can infect others. Symptoms include fever, diarrhoea and vomiting.

Preparedness in South Yorkshire

In line with national plans relating to Ebola a number of actions have been taking place in South Yorkshire. Three exercises have been held in October and November testing the preparedness of health services and wider partners for dealing with a case of Ebola and the wider consequences for communities.

The Royal Hallamshire Hospital Infectious Diseases department is one of the 4 High Level Isolation Centres across the country that could, if required, receive a case of Ebola. Sheffield Teaching Hospital Foundation Trust have planned extensively for this eventuality.

South Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum (LRF - the partnership group that plans and responds to emergency situations) has discussed Ebola preparedness and the Local Resilience Forum public information and media group has met to coordinate communication messages about Ebola across South Yorkshire Public Sector Organisations.

Sources of further information:

Public Health England has produced fact sheets and guidance for a wide range of settings and audiences including:

- Public Health England Ebola advice and risk assessment for educational childcare and young person's settings <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ebola-advice-and-risk-assessment-for-educational-childcare-and-young-persons-settings> last updated 17th October 2014.
- Facts and mythbusters <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ebola-top-facts-and-mythbuster>.

This briefing includes information produced by Public Health England.

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