

Warwickshire Health and Wellbeing Board

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Winter Pressures & Feel Well Campaign – Agencies Working Together and Building Resilience

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Purpose: To update and request support from the Warwickshire Health and Wellbeing Board with regard to current multi-agency resilience arrangements for winter, including public winter campaigns.

Winter Resilience in Health and Social Care:

An exercise was held on 6th November 2013 (Exercise Paladin) in Leicester, with the aim of testing primarily NHS, but also multi-agency emergency arrangements (local authority public health representative participated). The exercise related to a mass casualty and chemical release event (related to a train crash) at a time when the health and social care economy was experiencing winter pressures due to persistent cold weather. A common theme identified by agencies attending the exercise was the need to work on a mechanism for

agreeing PHE and NHS communications to the public and to health providers in the context on a major incident (full report to be published on 18th December). A second event is planned for the 21st November, relating to winter pressures and the operational impact of Norovirus outbreaks. The Local Health Resilience Partnership and NHS England Local Area Team are assuring NHS provider plans and Local authority planning for winter pressures. Local authority public health teams are convening a cold weather multi-agency communications group (including colleagues from NHS England, CCGs, Public Health England and Local Government), with a remit for ensuring consistency of both professional and public messaging/alerting during the winter, and ensuring compliance with the National Cold Weather Plan and the Warwickshire Cold Weather Plan. Business continuity plans are in place for all social care services including commissioned services.

Upstream Resilience: Feel Well, Norovirus and Warm and Well campaigns

The “Feel Well’ campaign is being launched through the partnership efforts of the Clinical Commissioning Groups, the Arden Commissioning Support Unit, secondary care Provider Trusts and the Public Health Departments in Coventry and Warwickshire.

The campaign will be delivered through a variety of media and engagement events. Messages include ensuring that all those who are eligible receive their flu vaccination, and the importance of good hand hygiene in the wintertime due to circulating viruses such as Norovirus and colds/flu. Advice is given about staying warm and active, avoiding falls and ensuring individuals have sufficient supplies of food, drink and regular medications in the home. The campaign also aims to support people to access health advice appropriately, giving details of the range of sources of advice available, with a view to reducing pressure on A&E.

Complementary campaigns related to Norovirus prevention, led by South Warwickshire Foundation Trust (SWFT), are also being launched. Hand hygiene posters (adapted from SWFT materials) are to be

cascaded out to nursing and residential homes, as well as nurseries and schools through the efforts of Public Health Warwickshire. Warm and Well activities (led by the Warwickshire Warm & Well Partnership Board) are being taken forward on a multi-agency basis. Warm and Well thermocard leaflets are being distributed to GP surgeries to be given to vulnerable patients, as well as vulnerable patients identified by social care colleagues. It is envisaged that these leaflets will also be distributed through the county wellbeing hubs, through housing officers, hospital discharge teams and the ambulance service (pending agreement). Further distribution will be advised upon by the Affordable Warmth Steering Group. Warm and Well messages include simple advice and guidance of steps to take in keeping homes warm in the winter, and signposting to an advice line (run by Act on Energy Freephone 0800 988 2881) who can advise on how to reduce fuel bills and make homes more energy efficient. Advice regarding how to claim winter fuel and cold weather payments, as well as details of other relevant financial support is given.

Seasonal Flu Vaccination Campaign

As part of the assurance role for flu vaccination, Warwickshire County Council are working closely with NHS partners to maximise uptake of flu vaccination across all groups, particularly focusing on groups with lower uptake historically (clinically at risk adults and children, pregnant women, carers and health and social care staff).

Flu vaccination has been promoted via a range of media (including radio and television), with a particular focus on opportunities provided by local authority links. Promotional materials have been sent out to GPs, pharmacies, libraries and sports centres. Support for the campaign has also been sought from school (including special school) head teachers. The importance of ensuring informal carers are vaccinated has been raised with carers' groups and an antenatal promotional campaign is due to be launched.

Pharmacy vaccination vouchers have been distributed to all local authority directly employed social care staff who provide personal care. Letters have been written to care home and home care service managers regarding the responsibility to ensure their staff are adequately vaccinated, facilitated by the Strategic Commissioning Unit of the People Group. CCG colleagues have been asked by NHS England colleagues to request assurance from their providers that their front-line staff are being offered vaccination, and that this is being treated as a priority.

It is planned to rigorously evaluate the campaign in Warwickshire (and Coventry) this year, with a view to identifying personal and professional barriers to vaccination uptake, and understanding how those partners involved in the campaign would like to be supported in future campaigns.

Recommendations to Health and Wellbeing Board

- 1) To note that adequate major incident, winter pressures response and business continuity plans are in place and tested for the winter.
- 2) To promote uptake of seasonal flu vaccination among any staff who are in clinical risk groups, and employed health and social care staff who provide direct personal care.
- 3) To consider how we can further the reach of the Warwickshire Warm and Well Messages within the most vulnerable groups, e.g. scope for working with hospital discharge teams, housing officers etc. Support with providing contacts would be appreciated.
- 4) To consider the response the Health and Wellbeing Board might like to make with regard to the recent disproportionate increases in the price of fuel initiated by fuel companies recently.