

Health, Social Care and Sport Committee

27th Meeting, 2022 (Session 6), Tuesday, 27 September 2022

Winter planning

Note by the clerk

Introduction

1. At its meeting today, the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee will hold two evidence sessions on winter preparedness and winter plans for the NHS and Social Care.
2. The purpose of these sessions is to explore what planning has taken place to ensure the safe and effective operation of health and social care services over the winter months.
3. The Committee will take evidence from:
 - Caroline Lamb, Chief Executive of NHS Scotland and Director-General, Health and Social Care.

and then from,

- NHS Grampian;
- NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde; and
- NHS Dumfries and Galloway;

Background

4. At its business planning meeting on 7 June 2022, the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee agreed to undertake a number of one-off evidence sessions including one on winter planning.
5. This follows on from an evidence session last year ([9 November 2021](#)), where the Committee took evidence on winter preparedness from the Royal College of Emergency Medicine, the British Medical Association's general practitioner committee, the Royal College of Nursing, the Allied Health Professions Federation Scotland, the Coalition of Care and Support Providers and Unison.
6. This year's winter plan has not, as yet, been published by the Scottish Government. The Scottish Government published its [Health and social care: winter overview 2021 to 2022](#) in October 2021. This plan was organised around:

- Maximising capacity
 - Supporting staff wellbeing
 - Supporting effective system flow
 - Improving outcomes
7. The Scottish Government also prepared a plan for adult social care, the [Adult social care - winter preparedness plan: 2021-22. This was published in October 2021 and was](#) centred around four key principles:
1. Supporting the needs and wellbeing of the social care workforce and unpaid carers
 2. Maintaining high quality integrated health and social care services throughout the autumn/winter period
 3. Protecting those who use social care support from the direct impact of COVID-19 and wider winter viruses
 4. Working in partnership across health and social care to deliver the plan
8. In its [NHS in Scotland Report 2021](#), Audit Scotland noted:
- “The Scottish Government acknowledged that winter 2021/2022 was likely to be extremely challenging for the NHS and, along with NHS boards, took action to prepare. The usual winter pressures, such as respiratory illnesses and falls, need to be managed along with Covid-19. The NHS has been rolling out its most extensive flu vaccination programme yet to minimise the spread of infection and the impact on services.
- “The Scottish Government asked NHS boards to update their remobilisation plans in Autumn 2021, to help ensure they were well prepared for the winter. In addition, in October 2021, the Scottish Government published a health and social care winter overview, outlining its winter planning preparations. This was based on four principles:
1. maximising capacity through investment in staffing, resources and facilities
 2. caring for staff by ensuring timely access to wellbeing support, so that they can continue to work safely and effectively
 3. reducing delayed discharge from hospitals and increased access to care in a range of community settings
 4. improving outcomes by investing in delivering the right care in the right setting.”
9. NHS Boards often publish their own winter preparedness plans if requested and in line with guidance from the Scottish Government.

**Clerks to the Committee
22 September 2022**