

# Community services prioritisation framework

11 January 2022

Given the increasing pressures on the health system due to the Omicron wave of COVID-19 this winter and the need to provide booster jabs as quickly as possible, local decisions will need to be made about how to prioritise use of the community health workforce. Redeployed community workforce should be used first to ensure there is adequate community health provision to support as many patients as possible out of hospital. The capacity in community services will need to be extended to enable this including, but not limited to, supporting discharge pathways and urgent community response provision, mobilising virtual wards and supporting end-of-life care at home.

This framework sets out national advice in relation to the relative priority of community health services. It aids decision-making on community health workforce redeployment locally and regionally between 11 January 2022 and 28 February 2022. The expectation (currently) is that all services should resume from 1 March 2022.

It may be helpful to review the [Age UK report findings](#) on the implications of stopping services following the first wave of COVID-19. Building on the learning from this wave, decisions to delay or pause service provision for specific services lines or groups of patients should be risk assessed locally for:

1. impact on patients' outcomes
2. consideration of patient complexity and the impact of stopping any one service as part of an integrated service offer for Adults or an EHCP plan for Children
3. impact on [health inequalities](#)
4. safeguarding responsibilities/opportunities
5. the need for timely interventions and assessment
6. consideration of length of time patients have been waiting
7. impact on the wider system and the ability for the system to 'catch up later'.

Service prioritisation decisions will need clinical leadership and local sign off from the local chief nurse and chief medical colleague.

## Summary of services that could temporarily be paused

#	Services	Commissioner	Location	Suggested prioritisation if needed during January and February 2022	Details
<b>Children and young people services</b>					
1	National child measurement programme	Local authorities	Home and school	Pause	Changes to services commissioned by local authorities should be agreed with local directors of public health
2	Friends and Family Test	NHS England	Provider based	Pause	
3	Vision screening	Clinical commissioning groups	Home and clinic based	Pause (including pre-school checks), except: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• newborn visual checks (within 72 hours of birth) cannot be stopped as neonatal cataracts need to be spotted early</li> <li>• 6-week check can safely be conducted at 8 weeks, except as part of an integrated approach for assessment of complex needs</li> <li>• when an issue with vision has been identified</li> <li>• children under care plans.</li> </ul>	
<b>Adult services</b>					
4	Friends and Family Test	NHS England	Provider based	Pause	

#	Services	Commissioner	Location	Suggested prioritisation if needed during January and February 2022	Details
5	NHS health checks	Local authorities	Community based	Pause	Changes to services commissioned by local authorities should be agreed with directors of public health.
6	Non-acute outpatient clinics	Clinical commissioning groups	Clinic based	Pause, except: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• review of post-surgical high-risk cases, eg diabetic foot</li> <li>• follow-up appointments following community hospital admission</li> <li>• support for readmission avoidance in older people</li> </ul>	
7	Weight management and obesity services	Clinical commissioning groups	Home and clinic based	Pause behavioural interventions for weight loss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For Tier 3 weight management services where teams are also providing management of associated co- morbidities (eg Type 2 diabetes, obstructive sleep apnoea), clinicians should appropriately triage clinic lists to assess which patients may need ongoing support, ideally remotely.</li> </ul> <p>These services may also need to be prioritised if obesity is impacting on quality of life or other risk factors such as pre-diabetes, mental health problems or disability.</p>	

## Services that should continue or continue with prioritised waiting lists

#	Services	Commissioner	Location	Plan during December to January 2022	Details
<b>Children and young people services</b>					
8	Pre-birth and 0–5 service (health visiting)	Local authorities	Home visits: virtual and clinic based	Continue.	
9	School nursing	Local authorities/ clinical commissioning groups for specialist school nurses	Home visits, school and clinic based	Continue.	
10	Therapy interventions (physiotherapy, speech and language, occupational therapy, dietetics, orthotics)	Clinical commissioning groups and/or local authorities		Continue, but with prioritisation of patient lists. Deferral of provision could be considered for low priority cases to free up workforce capacity.	
11	Looked after children's teams	Clinical commissioning groups and/or local authorities	Home visits, school and clinic based	Continue, but with prioritisation of patient lists. Deferral of provision could be considered for low priority cases to free up workforce capacity.	

#	Services	Commissioner	Location	Plan during December to January 2022	Details
12	Child health information service	NHS England	Office base	Continue.	
13	Community nursing services (planned care and rapid response teams)	Clinical commissioning groups	Home or clinic	Continue.	
14	Nursing and therapy teams support for long-term conditions	Clinical commissioning groups	Home or clinic	Continue, but with prioritisation of patient lists. Deferral of provision could be considered for low priority cases to free up workforce capacity.	
15	Community paediatric service (including autism diagnostic services)	Clinical commissioning groups	Home visits, school and clinic based	Continue, but with prioritisation of patient lists. Deferral of provision could be considered for low priority cases to free up workforce capacity.	
16	Wheelchair, orthotics, prosthetics and equipment	Clinical commissioning groups and/or local authorities	Home and clinic	Continue, but with prioritisation of patient lists. Deferral of provision could be considered for low priority cases to free up workforce capacity.	Consider use of private providers/shops to supply. Changes to services commissioned by local authorities should be agreed with directors of public health.
17	Immunisations (school-aged services)	NHS England	'Clinics' in schools, community clinics	Continue.	Deliver service in line with the priorities set by NHS England.

#	Services	Commissioner	Location	Plan during December to January 2022	Details
18	Safeguarding	Clinical commissioning groups and/or local authorities	Home and clinic	Continue.	
19	Continuing care packages	Clinical commissioning groups	Home or clinic	Continue.	
20	Children palliative and end-of-life care	Clinical commissioning groups and/or local authorities	Home or hospice	Continue.	
21	Rapid response service		Home or clinic	Continue.	
22	Sexual assault services		Clinic and police stations	Continue.	
23	Antenatal, newborn and children screening and immunisation services	NHS England	Maternity units, clinic, general practice and home	Continue.	
24	Newborn hearing screening	NHS England	Maternity unit clinics and home	Continue	
25	Audiology	Clinical commissioning groups	Clinic based	Continue, but with prioritisation of patient lists. Deferral of provision could be considered	

#	Services	Commissioner	Location	Plan during December to January 2022	Details
				for low priority cases to free up workforce capacity	
26	Emotional health and wellbeing/ mental health support	Clinical commissioning groups and/or local authorities	Home visits, school and clinic based	Continue.	

Services	Commissioner	Location	Plan during December to January 2022	Details
<b>Adult and older people services</b>				
27	Audiology services	Clinical commissioning groups	Clinic based	Continue, but with prioritisation of patient lists. Deferral of provision could be considered for low priority cases to free up workforce capacity.
28	Podiatry and podiatric surgery	Clinical commissioning groups	Clinics, inpatient wards and home	Continue, but with prioritisation of patient lists. Deferral of provision could be considered for low priority cases to free up workforce capacity.
29	Wheelchair, orthotics, prosthetics and equipment	Clinical commissioning groups	Clinics, inpatient wards and home	Continue, but with prioritisation of patient lists. Deferral of provision could be considered for low priority cases to free up workforce capacity.
30	Nursing and therapy support for LTCs including: heart failure, continence/ colostomy, tissue viability, TB,			Continue, but with prioritisation of patient lists. Deferral of provision could be considered for low priority cases to free up workforce capacity.



Services	Commissioner	Location	Plan during December to January 2022	Details
	Parkinson's, respiratory/COPD, stroke, MS, MND, falls, lymphoedema, diabetes			
31	Rehabilitation services (integrated and unidisciplinary) (physio, OT, speech and language therapy, etc)	Clinical commissioning groups and/or local authorities	Continue. Focus on rehabilitation and recovery for those discharged from hospital-based care and those whose functioning is deteriorating at home. Also consider prioritisation of patient lists where demand exceeds capacity.	
32	Neuro-rehabilitation (multidisciplinary) – stroke, head injury and neurological conditions	Clinical commissioning groups	Continue. Focus on rehabilitation and recovery for those discharged from hospital-based care and those whose functioning is deteriorating at home. Consider extending early supported discharge arrangements.	
33	Therapy interventions (physio, speech	Clinical commissioning	Continue. Focus on rehabilitation and recovery for those discharged	

Services		Commissioner	Location	Plan during December to January 2022	Details
	and language, occupational therapy, dietetics, orthotics)	groups and/or local authorities		from hospital-based care and those whose functioning is deteriorating at home. Also consider prioritisation of patient lists where demand exceeds capacity.	
34	Contraception	NHS England and local authorities	Clinic based	Continue	Changes to services commissioned by local authorities should be agreed with directors of public health.
35	Sexual and reproductive health services				
36	HIV services				
37	Musculoskeletal service	Clinical commissioning groups	Clinic based	Continue services that aligned with orthopaedic and rheumatology planning to enable continued referral of emergency and urgent MSK conditions to secondary care services (see clinical guide for management of patients on <a href="#">MSK</a> ).  Serve patients who have had recent elective surgery, fractures or those with acute and/or complex needs, including carers with a focus to enable self-management.	Guidance to support recognition and management of urgent and emergency conditions available via <a href="http://arma.uk.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Urgent-emergency-MSK-conditions-requiring-onward-referral-2.pdf">http://arma.uk.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Urgent-emergency-MSK-conditions-requiring-onward-referral-2.pdf</a>  Guidance to inform decision-making with regard to corticosteroid injection and timing of COVID-19 vaccination available via (see section 13) <a href="http://arma.uk.net/covid-19-vaccination-and-msk/">http://arma.uk.net/covid-19-vaccination-and-msk/</a> Decision support tools with regard to onward referral are available <a href="https://www.versusarthritis.org/about-">https://www.versusarthritis.org/about-</a>

Services	Commissioner	Location	Plan during December to January 2022	Details	
			<p>Triage services to inform shared decision-making with regard to complex patients, diagnostics (MRI and ultrasound) and timely onward referral.</p> <p>Where possible, provide capacity to support other community resources focused on rehabilitation and recovery for those discharged from acute care and those whose functioning is deteriorating at home, and/or the administration of vaccines.</p> <p>All other rehabilitation work could be deprioritised with patients enabled to self-manage (this includes rehabilitation groups).</p>	<p><a href="https://www.csp.org.uk/healthcare-professionals/musculoskeletal-decision-support-tools/">arthritis/healthcare-professionals/musculoskeletal-decision-support-tools/</a></p> <p>Resources to support self-management; these are being worked up and are likely to be an update to <a href="https://www.csp.org.uk/MSKadvice">www.csp.org.uk/MSKadvice</a></p>	
38	NHS England	Clinic and home visits	Continue.		
39		Minor oral surgery			Clinic based
40		Day case surgery			
41		Primary dental work			

	Services	Commissioner	Location	Plan during December to January 2022	Details
42	Urgent dental clinics				
43	Alcohol and addiction service	Local authorities	Home and clinic based	Continue.	
44	Drug and addiction service				
45	NHS continuing healthcare packages	Clinical commissioning groups	Home and care homes	Continue.	
46	Community nursing services (including district nurses and homeless health)	Clinical commissioning groups	Home and clinic based	Continue.	
47	Urgent community response/rapid response team	Clinical commissioning group		Continue.	
48	Out-of-hours GP services	Clinical commissioning groups	Home and clinic based	Continue.	
49	111 service		Clinic based	Continue.	
50	Walk-in centres			Continue.	
51	Urgent treatment centres			Continue.	

	Services	Commissioner	Location	Plan during December to January 2022	Details
52	Palliative and end-of-life and hospice care (including non-specialist end-of-life care delivered by community/district nursing teams)	Clinical commissioning groups	Home, registered care home or clinic based, bed-based care, hospice	Continue.	
53	Rehabilitation bed-based care	Clinical commissioning groups and/or local authorities, NHS England	Home, registered care home or clinic based, bed-based care, hospice	Continue.	
54	Intermediate care and reablement	Clinical commissioning groups and/or local authorities		Continue.	
55	Adult safeguarding	Clinical commissioning groups	Home	Continue.	
56	Phlebotomy	Clinical commissioning groups	Home/clinic	Continue, but with prioritisation of patient lists. Deferral of provision could be considered for low priority cases to free up workforce capacity.	

	Services	Commissioner	Location	Plan during December to January 2022	Details
57	Home oxygen assessment services	Clinical commissioning groups	Home	Continue.	
58	Clinical support to social care, care homes and domiciliary care	Local authorities and clinical commissioning groups	Home and care home	Continue.	
59	Sexual assault services	Clinical commissioning groups and/or local authorities	Clinic and police stations	Continue.	
60	Smoking cessation	Local authorities	Community	Continue, but with prioritisation of patient lists. Deferral of provision could be considered for low priority cases to free up workforce capacity.  Smoking cessation services for pregnant woman should not be deferred.	
61	Abortion services	Clinical commissioning groups	Hospital, clinic, home	Continue.	