

National Emergency Pressures Panel - note of the meeting

15 January 2018, 13:30 – 2:00

Panel attendees: Derek Alderson (President, Royal College of Surgeons), Paul Cosford (Public Health England), Jane Cummings (NHS England), Jane Dacre (Royal College of Physicians), Sir Bruce Keogh (Chair) (NHS England), Clifford Mann (NHS England), Kathy McLean (Deputy Chair) (NHS Improvement), Pauline Philip (NHS Improvement and NHS England), Prem Premachandran (Care Quality Commission), Keith Willett (NHS England)

1. The Chair welcomed the group and outlined that this shortened meeting was to provide the panel with an opportunity to discuss recent operational pressures.
 2. The panel noted that full activity data will not be available until the beginning of March, but Regional Directors have indicated that following the national guidance issued on 21 December and 2 January, providers in a pressured place are postponing some non-urgent, non-cancer and non-time critical elective work and doing so in a more planned way.
- The National Director provided an update from a flu perspective.
 - Modelling has suggested the flu season is likely to continue to increase in severity.
 - A national cross government coordination function has been stood up on flu preparedness.
 - Overall the system is coping well with the pressure, but flu is absorbing a significant amount of our staffing and bed capacity.
 - The following points were made in discussion:
 - Whilst an important element of the National Emergency Pressures Panel (NEPP) recommendations on postponement is the redeployment of staff to support non-elective flow, staff should not work beyond their supervision or capability. Trust management and local senior clinical leadership should be supported to ensure this is not the case.
 - There is learning to be shared from the London regions response to care home flu outbreaks.
 - There is capacity in NHS 111 to open an additional flu line in the pathways algorithm. NHS England is exploring whether it could be appropriate to do this season given the characteristics of presentation and current pressure on primary care.
 - Last week the Medical Directors for NHS England and for NHS Improvement wrote to NHS staff, NHS trusts and primary care with regards to continuing to raise flu vaccination rates.
 - There may be compelling evidence on the use of antivirals early in flu presentation, and this approach is included in Public Health England

guidelines. The opportunity to increase their use in hospital settings could be further explored.

Action: The Chair to write to the Chief Medical Officer to ask for her advice on what further role antivirals could have in hospital settings and what actions could we be taking nationally to support this.