

Note of the National Escalation Pressures Panel meeting

Thursday 20 December, Skipton House

Panel attendees: Steve Powis (Chair – NHS England), Derek Alderson (Royal College of Surgeons), Paul Cosford (Public Health England), Andrew Goddard (Royal College of Physicians), Bruce Keogh (Birmingham Women's and Children's NHS Foundation Trust), Cliff Mann (NHS England), Ruth May (NHS Improvement), Carrie MacEwen (Academy of Medical Royal Colleges), Kathy McLean (NHS Improvement), Pauline Philip (National Director for Emergency and Elective Care, NHS England and NHS Improvement), Prem Premachandran (Care Quality Commission), Keith Willett (NHS England)

1. The Chair welcomed members of the panel to the meeting. The notes of the last meeting were approved as an accurate record.
2. The National Director for Emergency and Elective Care described the current picture of both A&E and elective care. November data showed that A&E performance was just slightly below where it was at the same time last year.
3. As part of the assurance process there had been check-in calls with the 91 trust chief executives and their relevant CCG accountable officers for systems which had faced delivery challenges during the year. The feedback from these calls was positive, with systems having plans in place to mitigate pressures over winter, and that they were working with local authorities to ensure that the additional social care monies were being spent to support winter efforts.
4. Good progress was being made in respect to elective care, and the position on reducing 52 week waits was continuing to improve.
5. Flu vaccination rates were largely on par with the previous year for staff, patients, over 65s and children. The prevalence of flu in the community was light, and better than at the same time last year. Work would continue with Public Health England on vaccination rates and monitoring flu in the community.
6. The chair summarised the current position: the position of trusts to manage winter pressures felt better than last year; flu was not yet a significant factor; and there were a small number of systems of particular concern which were being supported.
7. The Chair concluded the meeting and thanked members for their time. The next call was scheduled for 11 January.