

Winter Protection Plan 2020/21:

Integrated Impact Assessment

Sections 1 and 7

SECTION 1. WHAT ACTION IS THE WELSH GOVERNMENT CONSIDERING AND WHY?

The Winter Protection Plan (WPP) is being developed in order to set out the high level responsibilities and commitments of both the Welsh Government and its partner organisations to meet the demands of winter 2020/21.

The NHS in Wales always plan for the winter months to ensure that the service is ready to cope with the extra demands that the cold weather brings and the increase in illnesses that patients face. This year the challenges are more severe, with COVID-19 likely to place excess demands on our services.

The Winter Protection Plan has been developed consistently with the *Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015* at the centre of our thinking, drawing on the five ways of working, and aligning with the commitments made in *A Healthier Wales*.

Long term

This Winter Protection Plan covers the winter period 2020/21 but brings together the actions and developments since March including the learning, innovation and new ways of working that will stand the population in good stead for the future. COVID-19 has been a pandemic which affected the whole world, reaching Europe in spring 2020. In Wales, as of 1 September, more than 18,000 people have been confirmed as having COVID-19 and there have been nearly 1600 deaths:

<https://public.tableau.com/profile/public.health.wales.health.protection#!/vizhome/RapidCOVID-19virology-Public/Headlinesummary>

COVID-19 is a contagious disease which affects the whole population although there are some people in vulnerable groups that are likely to be affected more severely than others. While work is underway to develop a vaccine COVID-19 the health and social care sector will continue to experience the impact of the pandemic for some time.

We need to plan and change the way we live our lives and the way in which we deliver our health and social services to adapt to the challenges that COVID-19 present.

The WPP addresses the four levels of harm from COVID-19:

- Harm from COVID itself
- Harm from overwhelmed NHS and social care system
- Harm from reduction in non COVID activity
- Harm from wider societal actions/ lockdown

The WPP is an integrated plan which sets out how organisations working across the health and social care community will need to contribute in order that all services can deliver effective care to the people of Wales this winter. It will offer a blueprint for the longer term.

The WPP seeks to support the delivery of the longer term benefits such as A Healthier Wales' vision for integrated and sustainable health and social care and supporting the delivery of the Programme for Government 'Taking Wales Forward'.

The lessons learnt from the work undertaken to respond to the pandemic will be critical in supporting recovery and long-term continuity. WPP will draw on the opportunities that have emerged during the pandemic to support new ways of working, such as the introduction of innovative and digital solutions, financial investment and strengthened partnership, governance and planning arrangements.

Prevention

The Welsh Government has developed strategies and has approached COVID-19 with strong support on prevention. It builds on existing programmes such as the planned care and unscheduled care programmes that set a broad commitment to focus on a broader view of prevention starting with opportunities for personal wellbeing. The introduction and support for the Test, Trace and Protect (TPP) strategy and implementation, together with the support of social distancing and other precautionary measures, such as quarantining for those returning from other countries with higher infection rates, reflects preventative approach adopted.

The WPP supports this approach and strongly support the TPP and vaccination programme that will be undertaken this winter. The WPP also support shielding and the need to protect those in care homes and those who are most vulnerable the elderly and those with underlying health conditions, as well as those in society who are at greater risk.

The WPP also recognises that many of the levers to maintain health and wellbeing, particularly in areas such as the mental health impact of Covid, lie outside of the health and social care system. Welsh Government action and investment in areas that protect and prevent ill health such as employment support, homelessness prevention, debt advice and community resilience are crucial

Integration

Prosperity for All has been considered. The aims and objectives of scoping and producing the WPP is aligned to the need to build an integrated and seamless health and social care environment.

The WPP recognises that the National Lockdown to prevent the spread of COVID-19 earlier in the year was detrimental to a significant number of people, especially those already suffering from a mental health condition.

In terms of mental health, whilst some services have experienced a reduction in demand during the pandemic, referrals are now increasing. It is important that services continue to respond to mental health needs in the context of this increasing demand and the WPP underlines the fact that mental health (including substance misuse services) have been designated as 'essential' and therefore must be maintained.. It

is particularly important that people are encouraged to access mental health services when they need them, now and in the future.

Collaboration

Prosperity for All champions working collaboratively across boundaries to deliver improvement in health and well-being for the population of Wales.

The WPP is a high level document that draws on the partnerships that exist across the health and social care community. The WPP requires all partner organisations to demonstrate their contribution to tackling COVID-19 and to preventing further spread and impact from the disease contribute over the next six months.

To date all key partners, namely NHS Wales, Local Authorities, the wider social care sector (care providers and third sector), universities and partnership structures such as Regional Partnership Boards and Public Service Bodies have worked collaboratively to address the challenges COVID-19 has brought to Wales. That same commitment is shown in the WPP and while the time period to produce the document has been short the Welsh Government have ensured that a wide range of stakeholders have been sighted on its development, including members of the Senedd.

The Welsh Government is committed to a collaborative response ensuring that Regional Partnership Boards, and their respective health and social care partners, work collectively through a range of plans and data returns to provide robust reassurance that this winter services will be effective and resilient.

Involvement

The WPP has been developed by the Welsh Government quickly in order to guide the winter planning that is traditionally undertaken in autumn each year.

NHS Wales organisations, local authorities, third and independent sector were aware of its development. However, because of the speed of response necessary, during what is a traditional summer break period, the demands meant that there was less opportunity to fully involve colleagues in the development than would be ideally supported.

Impact

The WPP is important as it provides the overarching context within which the Welsh Government and its partners are expecting to address the challenges for health and social care this winter.

The WPP will build on experiences and what has been learnt. It will provide reassurance and direction around what is needed next to keep services joined up and support patients and staff over the coming months. It will provide clear messages to the public and stakeholders that further work will be undertaken to support greater levels of testing, through the Test, Trace and Protect Strategy for Wales, as well as delivering an expanded and comprehensive flu vaccination campaign this autumn.

Costs and Savings

No financial cost will be incurred in scoping and developing the WPP for health and social care, however there has already been considerable investment in the health and social care infrastructure during 2020-21 to support the main requirements set out in the WPP. For example this includes:

- Over £1.3bn allocated to support the NHS response to Covid. This includes the £800m stabilisation funding for NHS Wales announced in August.
- £45m for Test, Trace and Protect Strategy implementation
- £62.7m through the Local Authority Hardship fund, to support providers of adult social care.
- £40m to support the social care workforce.

This funding will be used to support many of the actions which set out in the WPP.

Mechanism

Legislation is not proposed as part of this work, a regulatory impact assessment is not necessary.

SECTION 7. CONCLUSION

7.1 How have people most likely to be affected by the proposal been involved in developing it?

The urgency for the Winter Protection Plan (WPP) to be produced, alongside the Quarter 3/ Quarter 4 Framework for NHS Wales, has meant that there has necessarily been rapid informal consultation with a range of stakeholders.

However, joint working with stakeholders, including NHS Wales, local authorities, third and independent sectors, and Regional Partnership Boards has been undertaken in the months leading up to the publication of the WPP requirements.

All stakeholders have been kept informed of the production of the WPP with a written statement issued by the Minister for Health and Social Services on 7 August 2020.

<https://gov.wales/written-statement-winter-protection-plan-2020-21>

Since then, the development of the WPP and the Quarter 3/ Quarter 4 Framework for NHS Wales has been undertaken through discussion with colleagues across the health and Social services department within Welsh Government, professional leads and senior colleagues from within the service such as NHS Chief Executives, Directors of Planning etc.

In early September all stakeholders have been kept sighted on the development of the WPP through correspondence and made aware that publication of the plan will be mid-September 2020. The urgency for the WPP to be produced and issued is to inform and support winter planning for 2020/21 in the light of the COVID-19 challenges. It brings together the range of existing and expected preparations for winter and stakeholders are already sighted on the majority of areas.

7.2 What are the most significant impacts, positive and negative?

The WPP should have a positive impact on people across Wales. The WPP is the Welsh Government's overarching plan that will set out the broad context and direction of travel for health and social care until March 2021.

It sets out the requirements of stakeholders, about the range of actions and contingencies that they are expected to put in place across the health and care system, and with wider partners, to manage the public health emergency and provide services over the coming challenging winter period. It provides assurance to the public that we are working together across the country to keep Wales safe.

The main impacts will be positive in that the WPP is aimed at all people regardless of age, race, religion, etc. The WPP does recognise that some groups of people may be more adversely affected by COVID-19. It will help people to understand their personal responsibility for themselves and the impact on others, as well as what the Welsh Government is doing to continue to help them and to protect the NHS. The WPP sets out actions for the NHS in Wales, and their partners to undertake, to mitigate this, such as shielding and the test, trace and protect arrangements that are geared to reducing the spread of COVID-19.

Likewise, the WPP recognises the need for essential services operate during winter 2020/21 to ensure that people with non COVID-19 conditions are able to seek advice and treatment safely and in a timely manner.

Where some people do fall into a vulnerable group, whether because of their underlying health conditions or their ethnicity, then the WPP highlights the need for organisations to address these in the way in which they deliver their services.

7.3 In light of the impacts identified, how will the proposal:

- **Maximise contribution to our well-being objectives and the seven wellbeing goals and/or;**
- **Avoid, reduce or mitigate any negative impacts**

The WPP will contribute to the well-being goal of 'a healthier Wales' because it addresses the need for all stakeholders and the public to work together to ensure that the health and social services in Wales can provide appropriate treatment and care for people with COVID-19 symptoms and those with other conditions.

The WPP promotes a whole system approach to health and social care that will enable individual needs and preferences to be met and; make an effort to reduce health and wellbeing inequalities.

7.4 How will the impact of the proposal be monitored and evaluated as it progresses and when it concludes?

The WPP will be monitored through the production of the requirements set out in the document. The NHS Quarter 3/ Quarter 4 Framework requirements, together with the data and further plans in place across the health and social care community.

The NHS Planning and Performance Team will work with health boards to monitor their plans throughout the winter period