

NHS Lanarkshire Out of Hours Service -- Winter and festive capacity planning

Background

This will be the third winter and festive season that NHS Lanarkshire Out of Hours Service will be covering under the new service provision brought about by the new GMS contract for GPs.

The Out Of Hours (OOH) service operates every weekday from 18:00 through to 08:00 the following morning, all day at the weekends and also all day on agreed Public Holidays.

NHS Lanarkshire has been working closely with NHS24 and The Scottish Executive in producing this framework that will suffice for both Winter planning and the forthcoming festive period, which for the third year in a row involves two “four day” holiday periods.

Patients access the NHS Lanarkshire OOH service via NHS24, calls are passed onto NHS Lanarkshire via our Hub at Hairmyres Hospital, where calls are routed to one of our three main Primary Care Emergency Centres (PCECs), one of our two minor PCECs or passed through to the home visiting part of the OOH service.

There continues to be significant levels of joint working with NHS Lanarkshire between the PCECs and the A & E departments on all the acute sites.

The core basic service will operate at all specified time throughout the winter & festive season. The enclosed document and appendices explain how additional capacity has been planned for and will be implemented at times of increased demand over the festive period or in the event of an epidemic of viral illness.

An outline of planning for a “Flu” epidemic as opposed to a pandemic is also included in Appendix 5

Capacity Planning – (a) Face to Face OOH Services

Core Task	Comment	Due Date
Review historical demand information with NHS 24	NHS Lanarkshire has reviewed local and NHS 24 data for the winter period 2005/2006, focussing on the two four day holiday periods at Christmas and New Year, but also the ensuing winter months of January and February. See Appendix 1)	Oct 06
Profile of demand (home visits, PCEC, Spk to Doc, etc)	Demand increases, particularly at weekends over the winter period. Over the holiday weekends 2006/2007, activity is anticipated on the Saturday of both weekends to be no greater than normal Saturdays. However, there will be increased demand on the Sunday, Monday & Tuesdays of both weekends.	Oct 06
Define skill-set requirements (GP's nurses, paramedics, pharmacists, traffic controllers, admin, etc.)	<p>HUB (traffic controllers) staff Receptionists General medical practitioners – centres/mobile/triage Centre based nurses. Community nurses Paramedics</p> <p>The service is currently exploring the use of pharmacists locally to support NHS 24 triage process. Details and numbers are still to be worked out.</p> <p>Discussions are also ongoing with the Liaison Mental Health teams as to what services will be provided directly during the festive period.</p> <p>NHS Lanarkshire emergency dental service will be operational to cover the festive period. Work is ongoing to complete the details.</p>	Oct 06
Staffing requirements to meet demand	Doctors will be taking untriaged calls from NHS 24 at weekends throughout the winter period. During the holiday weekends, doctors will be providing a similar service from 08.00 to 18.00 on the Sunday, Monday and	Oct 06

	<p>Tuesday.</p> <p>The OOH service capability will be augmented over the next few months by the centre-based nurses who will be able to work increasingly autonomously as they complete their training and mentoring programmes.</p> <p>In addition, standby doctors are being identified. These doctors will be brought into the service when demand exceeds existing capacity, as will occur if there is a flu surge. Normal services will operate from Friday 1800, and all day both weekends. Additional Doctors, Nurses, Paramedics will be working in the service from Sunday 24th to meet expected demand. The additional home visiting doctors will use their own vehicles and equipment. Standby staff will be available should activity exceed capacity. Staff will be called in following discussion between the Hub Supervisor and Service Development Manager. Standby staff will be available from 0800 hours on the Sunday, Monday & Tuesday of both festive weekends, and at weekends through January and February.</p>	
Staff availability	Work in progress. The doctor rota should be completed as planned. All slots are being filled by salaried doctors, and local doctors. NHSL has not had to seek additional doctors from locum agencies. Support staff rotas will also be completed by the end of October	Oct 06
Shift planning	Using data collected from activity (2005/2006), shift planning will ensure that staffing levels will reflect anticipated activity. NHS Lanarkshire will be working closely with NHS24 to match resources with demand.	Complete
Shift negotiations	Some staff groups have been assimilated to "Agenda for Change". Staff will be paid under their Agenda for Change" terms and conditions. Doctors pay rates to	Complete

	remain the same as last year.	
Gap analysis	Additional resources if required will be put in place to help bridge any gaps in service provision.	Complete
Change control monitoring	The Hub supervisor is responsible for monitoring activity, and ensuring that patients are seen timeously.	Complete
Reporting on staffing levels (demand vs actual)	On-call service development manager will be informed on a daily basis of any staffing difficulties. The Hub Supervisor will be given responsibility to fill shifts. Lists of all personnel contact details will be available in the Hub.	Complete
Activities to increase capacity.	<p>Activity data shows that the busiest periods throughout the winter period, and particularly over the public holidays is between 08.30 and 11.00.</p> <p>Doctors will be providing additional call triage input. The Service is currently trying to recruit Pharmacist to help the triage process during the busiest periods. Additional hub staff and doctors will be working at these times.</p> <p>Additional consulting rooms are being sort in Wishaw, Hairmyres, and Lanark.</p> <p>Patients may also be redirected to peripheral PCECs where there is less activity.</p> <p>Paramedics will be supplementing the home visiting service.</p>	Oct 06
Activities to reduce demand.	The communications department of NHSL is working with NHS 24 to raise public awareness in the appropriate use of the OOH service. Leaflets will be distributed to all Doctors surgeries, Accident and Emergency departments	Ongoing

	<p>and Pharmacies. Local newspapers will also carry information – not only on the arrangements for OOH cover over the festive period, but also on broader issues of how to deal with minor illnesses, e.g. flu.</p> <p>GP surgeries are being requested now (10/06) to begin advising patients with repeat prescriptions to plan ahead.</p>	
<p>Arrangements with local A&E units, other secondary care facilities, Pharmacists, the Ambulance Service, and Local Authorities where appropriate.</p>	<p>Ongoing winter planning meetings have and will continue to take place to provide local partners with information about operating plans, opening times and contingency planning issues. The service will liaise with the local discharge groups to find out what provision will be in place over the festive period. Agreement is being sorted with the acute division for the provision of additional rooms to be made available for use by the Out of Hours staff. There are already arrangements in place for each service to transfer patients. These protocols will continue to operate during the winter period. Local units jointly manage demand from walk in patients.</p>	Ongoing
<p>Other activities to deal with face to face demand.</p>		
<p>1. Additional consulting rooms at centres</p>	<p>Additional consulting rooms are being sorted at Wishaw and Hairmyres to provide capacity should activity outstrip demand. These rooms will be appropriately equipped, including access to the OOH IT system. Because of the accommodation difficulties in Monklands, patients will be diverted to the Cumbernauld Centre. Other local</p>	Oct 06

	alternatives are being explored to deal with the additional pressures that may arise if there is an outbreak of influenza. (not pandemic)	
2. Additional home visiting by Dr/Paramedic/Dist Nurse	Increase home visiting capacity by using standby doctors. The doctors will be using their own cars, and consequently will not have access to the OOH IT system. A paper record will be completed, and information will be transferred overnight on to the system by HUB staff. Paramedics will also undertake home visiting.	Oct 06
3. Trained Nurses seeing patients autonomously	Nurses based within the Out of Hours centre are now able to work autonomously within the competency. These nurses will supplement the existing arrangements.	Complete

Communications

Core Task	Comments	Due Date
Communications with the public	<p>Repeat prescriptions (Week beginning 4th December)</p> <p>Reminders to ensure people have sufficient quantities of regular medication. Keep this consistent with the message being put out nationally.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> press release 	Ongoing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prescription message of the day (on prescription requests in GP practices) • poster <p>Self help advice (Week beginning 11th December)</p> <p>Feature in local papers with self help messages from the NHS 24 website. Quote either a local GP or Dr Liz Duncan.</p> <p>Doctor' s surgeries, OOH Service and pharmacy Christmas & New Year opening times (Week beginning 4th December)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GP practices • press release • poster • advertising 	Ongoing
Communications to other services (SAS, A&E, in-hours GP's, local authorities, Pharmacists, etc)	Leaflets, posters and other information regarding the festive period will be distributed to all Doctors Surgeries, Pharmacies, Accident and Emergency departments and Local Authorities. Posters will be displayed in community/day centres across Lanarkshire.	Ongoing

<p>Use of national messages, media, posters, etc</p>	<p>Liaise with NHS 24 to arrange radio and TV coverage from a national perspective. (See above section)</p>	<p>Dec 06</p>
<p>Internal communications content and schedule</p>	<p>Winter plan submitted to CMT</p> <p>Regular updates provided to CMT/ GP Sub committee/general practitioners.</p> <p>Multidisciplinary OOH executive meetings routinely take place on a monthly basis</p> <p>Meetings arranged with A and E departments to review winter arrangements.</p> <p>NHS Lanarkshire newspaper will contain information on OOH service arrangements over the winter period.</p>	<p>Oct 06</p> <p>Oct/Nov/Dec/Jan</p> <p>November 06</p>

I.T. & Telephony

Core Task	Comments	Due Date
Request health-check and readiness reports from major IT/telephony suppliers	The HUB is now located jointly with the NHS 24/Lanarkshire satellite centre in Hairmyres. All systems are checked on an on-going basis. NHS 24/Lanarkshire satellite centre IT and telephony will be checked by NHS24	Ongoing
Planning for any remedial work required. (hardware/software/network)	Equipment for use in the additional treatment rooms will be installed at the beginning of December. This will enable access to the OOH IT system should the need arise.	Nov 06
Consider Winter Freeze (end-Nov technology change shut-down)	No update on software will be carried out after the end of Nov.	Complete
Joint readiness review with OOH Partners (NHS 24, SAS, etc)	Following the introduction of the Lanarkshire satellite a review of operations will be jointly carried out. The OOH monthly executive meetings provide regular opportunities to review winter plans.	Oct/Nov/Dec/Jan
Supplier on-site cover over the festive period (if applicable)	All Hub and service management will be aware of the IM&T contingency plan which will include details of cover throughout the winter period. Contact arrangements have been agreed with Adastra, the IT software suppliers, BT and in house, IT support.	Complete
Review and update contingency plans	Contingency plans are well established in Lanarkshire and have been tested as robust over the course of the year.	Complete

Medical/Pharmacy

Core Task	Comments	Due Date
Staff immunisation programme	The staff immunisation program is planned to commence the second week in December. Currently the occupational health department are awaiting delivery of vaccine. All staff will be encouraged to attend the clinics, details of which have been circulated to all services.	Dec 06
Syndromic surveillance	Continual monitoring of conditions presenting at OOH service will allow early warning of the possibility of a potential flu problem. The service will access national flu activity data.	Ongoing
Pharmacy resource in OOH period.	<p>The pharmacy stocks will be topped up the week prior to the festive period and again between Christmas and New Year. Reinforcement of the preferred option, wherever possible, is for Out of Hours Doctors and Nurses with prescribing facilities, to provide the patient with a prescription for dispensing at the community pharmacy. There will be a community pharmacy presence in most townships in NHS Lanarkshire every day including Xmas day, Boxing day, 1st and 2nd January. A memo will be sent to this effect the week prior to the holiday period. This should mean that stocks of medication will be drawn for local pharmacies.</p> <p>Local pharmacies will be participating in the national PGD programme. Where patients have been triaged to local pharmacists from NHS 24, and subsequently are felt by the pharmacist to require a consultation with a doctor, arrangements are being put into place, where the pharmacist will be able to access the HUB directly to arrange an appointment for the patient.</p> <p>NHSL is discussing with NHS 24, the possibility of having local pharmacists triaging at the local satellite centre.</p>	Oct 06

Reporting

Core Task	Comments	Due Date
Internal reporting requirements	Ongoing planning for the winter period will be reported via the OOH Executive group and NHSL Board meetings. A folder defining all details of the plan is being produced for those staff working in the service during the festive period. The Hub supervisor will liaise with the On Call Manager during the period to assess the call demand on the service.	Ongoing
External reporting requirements after consultation with OOH partners	The Hub supervisor will have regular contact with NHS 24 via the "warm handshake" at the commencement of each shift. A list of the Hub supervisors will be forwarded to NHS 24. The Hub supervisor will inform the A and E departments of any potential problems and monitor activity at each of the centres. Scottish Ambulance will be informed of any potential problems via a call to the Control Manager each day at 1400	Ongoing
Reporting schedule and distribution list	Final details still to be clarified with NHS 24	Ongoing

Finance

Core Task	Comments	Due Date
Costing estimates for all the above	A decision was made at the Executive group meeting that rate of pay for Doctors would remain the same as last year. Additional funding is being provided by NHS 24 to cover the doctors who will be taking untriaged calls over the winter period, including the holiday periods.	Complete
Budget plan	Following meetings held at National level there was an agreement that pay rates for doctors would remain at a similar level between local Health Boards. As NHS Lanarkshire paid slightly above the going rate last year therefore there will be no increase on this year's rate. Additional doctors and vehicles have already been factored into the budget.	Complete

Appendix 1

Graph of activity from Christmas/New Year 05/06

To Be Inserted

Appendix 2

Total activity in % of types of call for Christmas/New Year 05/06

To Be Inserted

Appendix 3

Staff Rotas for Christmas/New Year 05/06

Staff Rota



Christmas 06 New
Year Rota 200...

Doctors Rota



XMAS&NEW YEAR
2007.xls

Appendix 4

NHS 24/NHSL OUT-OF-HOURS CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Repeat prescriptions (Week beginning 4th December)

Reminder to ensure people have sufficient quantities of regular medication. Keep this consistent with the message being put out nationally.

- press release
- prescription message of the day
- poster

Self help advice (Week beginning 11th December)

Feature in local papers with self help messages from the NHS 24 website. Quote either a local GP or Dr Liz Duncan.

OOH Service and pharmacy Christmas & New Year opening times (Week beginning 19 December)

- press release
- poster
- advertising

Other considerations

Send all communications to NHS Lanarkshire and social work staff.

Liaise with NHS 24 to arrange radio and TV coverage from a national perspective.

Use of leaflets?

Appendix 5

Flu Plan

In the event of the emergence of an influenza epidemic or pandemic certain additional plans will come into place. These are covered under the following areas:

Declaration of Epidemic

This would be declared by the Primary Care Medical Director or The Associate Medical Director or Clinical Director for Out of Hours. This would be in conjunction with information available from Public Health and also actual impact on service demand, especially within the Out of Hours or festive periods.

Once declared the lead clinician would ensure that:

- The Executive Director on call for the PCOD was informed
- That NHS24 were aware of the situation, (although it is likely that they would know before NHS Lanarkshire)
- That relevant Acute Trust Medical Directors were informed
- Scottish Ambulance Service informed.

Additional capacity would be sought in a number of ways:

- Additional Medical staff would be contacted both from a standby list and by “cold calling” to ask for some help during this peak demand period.
- Additional facilities would be opened up at PCOD Health Centres, specifically Airdre HC.
- During next normal working day a request would go out to GMS practices to assist with additional capacity or extended opening hours.

Additional processes would be put in place to ensure that:

- Patients would be redirected to these facilities by arrangement with NHS24 and the NHS Lanarkshire hub.
- Medical equipment would be provided in these additional centres
- Access to medication would be incorporated into the plans
- Communications between the NHS Hub and these sites would be in place to ensure two way passage of information about the patients attending centres, the clinical outcomes and the onward transmission of this data to the patients GP.
- Additional admin staff will be on hand to ensure that faxed call sheets are returned to the hub and entered onto the Adastra system

- Additional capability would be provided in terms of patient transport to redirect patients to less busy centres or more peripheral centres at the demands of the service are constantly evaluated

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