

SOUTHERN TRUST Service Delivery Plan - Quarter 4 addendum (12/01/22)

Background

The Trust Service Delivery Plan for Quarter 4 covers the period from January to March 2022. However, it is recognised that in the production of Trust plan for Quarter 3, the Trust worked on the planning assumption that the plan would broadly cover the full winter period. The Trust reviewed and updated its plan in November/December 2021 to ensure robust planning remained in place throughout Quarter 4.

Due to the timing of these plans, the documents do not specifically take into account the potential impact of Omicron. The Trust further updated its surge response plan on 21st December to specifically take account of the omicron variant and the radical changes in transmissibility impacting on the current modelling projections. This operational plan is 'live' and continues to be updated as part of core operational incident management in the Trust. The resulting impact on Q3 and Q4 planned activity continues to be directly impacted by need for operational response to demand.

It has become clear over the last few weeks that the Omicron variant is less severe than Delta and will not have a further direct impact on the availability of acute beds over and above what is already set out in the Trust's surge plans. . However, while the numbers/ volume of covid patients may be less, the operational risk due to transmissibility remains and impacts on the decision making in the safe allocation of beds within open wards. The risk of nosocomial transmission in our acute hospital with poor infrastructure for pandemic level IPC requirements including lack of single room accommodation, inadequate sanitary provision and suboptimal ventilation capacity or appropriate waiting and circulation space impacts the bed planning model towards full risk management planning.

Furthermore, it is anticipated that the levels of infection associated with Omicron will impact on the staffing resource across HSC services and in this regard the Trust has been asked to refresh Quarter 4 plans to take into account the downturn in staffing as a result of Omicron.

This addendum sets out the additional escalated Trust actions resulting from Omicron which are not detailed in the main Quarter 4 plan.

Additional escalated Trust actions

Given the emergence of omicron variant in NI and the resulting increased community transmission staff absence rates Southern Trust has been continually reviewing its winter plans. As an organisation, the Southern Trust will endeavour to keep as many

services operational as possible; however it is highly likely that many will be impacted given staff availability. Patient and client safety remains the priority of the Trust and risk management the core operational response approach given the sustained pressures.

In line with the regional modelling Southern Trust anticipates the pressure to be greatest in the next 6 weeks with the high case peak currently estimated on 22/1/22 as per the 4th of January Covid Forward Look Report for approximately 2 to 3 weeks. At that time the priority will be to focus on the most acutely unwell patients and to maintain where possible patient flow in the unscheduled journey through timely discharge. In order to do this we are working tirelessly to implement all actions as outlined in our winter plans. However in keeping with the risk of loss of staff resource to those key operational services Southern Trust is preparing to implement the following additional escalated actions:

- 1) The Trust are currently in Business Continuity Planning
- 2) Continue to implement actions from the Winter Workforce Plan
- 3) Pause appropriate corporate services to redeploy personnel to support the key operational services identified.
- 4) Prioritise electives in Daisy Hill Hospital and protect surgical beds in line with the Regional Prioritisation Oversight Group (RPOG), taking into consideration the Regional Covid-19 Critical Care Surge Level.
- 5) Continue with visiting restrictions
- 6) The Trust has created 16 additional temporary step down beds for community patients awaiting domiciliary care packages at South Tyrone Hospital to release pressure on the acute site.

To be in a state of readiness the Trust has implemented the following:

- 1) SMT Bronze and Operational Bronze meetings will be enhanced to provide oversight of emergent operational capacity and staffing pressures.
- 2) Physiotherapy staff redeployed to wards to support effective discharge decision making
- 3) D2A/ICS/Reablement to provide daily in-reach to hospital discharge.
- 4) Safe staffing ratio to be confirmed across all wards to ensure equity between acute and non-acute wards
- 5) Physio recruitment to flexible pool
- 6) Nursing Home Sector – financial and staffing incentives to increase capacity for discharge beds to be tested with providers
- 7) Vaccination Centre De-escalation plan and or substitution plan (corporate staff to replace clinician staff and use of National Protocol)
- 8) LFTS to care home sector
- 9) HCA recruitment drive and increase waiting lists
- 10) Payment enhanced rates to staff

- 11) Communications – agreed approach and actions for messaging internal and external over the period
- 12) All Directorates BCP to be further considered for robustness/action
- 13) NIAS smoothing
- 14) Private Ambulance/transfer capacity to be reviewed
- 15) Daily staff absence monitoring reinstated
- 16) Additional capacity to support the demand for swabbing and contact tracing activity.
- 17) Escalated focus on discharge management.
- 18) Implement internal, external and regional workforce appeals.