



## **NIAS Service Delivery Plan - Quarter 4 addendum (20 January 2022)**

### **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 the Trust plan for Quarter 3, NIAS 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.

It has become clear over the last few weeks that the Omicron variant is less severe than Delta and will not have a further impact on what is already set out in Trust plans.

However, it is anticipated that the levels of infection associated with Omicron will impact on the staffing resource across all HSC services and in this regard the Trust has been asked to revisit 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 Northern Ireland and the resulting impact of increased community transmission on staff absence rates, NIAS has been reviewing its winter plans on an ongoing basis, learning from each surge and from key issues as they emerge which affect those plans.

NIAS will continue to maintain critical services for those most acutely unwell patients. The impact to staff availability has been considered and whilst the Trust continue to implement plans, all mitigating actions and protocols have been risk assessed to ensure a safe service is maintained with the available capacity. Patient safety remains the priority of the Trust.

In line with the regional modelling we anticipate the pressure to be greatest over the next 4-6 weeks with a peak in demand in mid to late January 2022. At that time the priority will be to focus on the most acutely unwell patients and to support, where possible, patient flow in the unscheduled journey through timely discharge.



However in keeping with the risk of loss of staff resource to those key operational services, we are preparing to implement the following additional actions:

- 1) Workforce prioritisation and allocation to highest clinical and priority areas.
- 2) Pause appropriate corporate services to redeploy personnel to support the key operational services identified.
- 3) We are implementing a range of measures aimed at supporting our staff, from Health and Wellbeing initiatives to implementing new protocols to mitigate the significant impact to staff working regularly beyond their shift.

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

- 1) Silver Tactical Command Room and Cell which is operating daily and conducting dynamic situation reviews and decision-making to manage resources effectively across N. Ireland.
- 2) A multi-disciplinary Surge Planning and Delivery Group established to implement mitigating actions to support capacity challenges which includes coordination of allocation of staff to priority areas.
- 3) Additional capacity to support the demand for swabbing, contact tracing and application of CMO Covid-19 guidance to safely return staff for duty.
- 4) A number of additional support roles have been identified to support teams and services where staffing shortages of professional staff exist to allow diversification of duties across alternative roles as the need arises.
- 5) Maintained all training programmes to increase capacity of core workforce to support staff shortages.
- 6) Providing training for partner agencies i.e. NIFRS to act as first responders and provide safe response times.