

Winter Plan – Council Review of Winter 2013/14

This note provides an overview of the various responses made during winter 2013 / 14 by Council departments. It follows the presentation, in September 2014, of the Urgent Care Lead for the local Clinical Commissioning Groups, Jane Taylor; that covered the relationship with adult social care in responding to urgent care surge and escalation issues during the winter period, hence that detail is not repeated in this note. It is noted that it was a mild winter and there was no particular challenge noted to services.

Housing Services

There were no issues to report for winter 2013/14.

Looking ahead, housing services have re-visited their severe weather plan, resulting in the use of an external call centre rather than the corporate CCTV centre, for improved business continuity. As funding is available, housing services are installing external insulation panels in low income areas and ensuring that the housing stock meets the decent homes standard.

With regards to rough sleepers, there was little call on the severe weather bed provision that is in place for rough sleepers. Although two hostels (Lower Hastings Street and Loughborough Road) had closed by the end of January this year, it had little impact and there was no significant increase in the number of rough sleepers. A review of the figures held for January, February and March 2014 indicate that the number of rough sleepers remained fairly constant at 10.

The severe weather bed provision will again be in place for this winter. There is a meeting being held on 12th November with colleagues in the voluntary sector to discuss what changes, if any, are needed and how they will operate.

Ian Craig / Martin Clewlow, Housing Services

Gritting / Highways

The winter of 2013/14 was generally mild particularly compared with the previous winter. There wasn't any snowfall that required dealing with and the 'gritters' were only sent out 30 times to carry out precautionary salting on the main roads and bus routes to keep them clear of ice. These primary salting routes cover 296km which is approximately 36% of the road network. We also have secondary routes which are salted to deal with snowfall, when we also salt footpaths in the city centre and others with high footfall. We have over 300 grit bins sited across the city so that residents can spread a mixture of salt and sand on the highway and they are usually sited

where roads or pavements have a steep gradient. Our stock of salt ready for this winter is over 2500 tonnes.

Further information can be found on our webpage: <http://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council-services/transport-traffic/highways/street-gritting-and-snow-clearing/>

Mike Pears, Highways and Transportation

Adult Social Care

This was a comparatively quiet winter. The services were able to manage demand without challenge; on one occasion the services stepped up their pressure status from level 1 (lowest) to level 2 (slight pressure). This was managed effectively by redirecting resources and reduced to level 1 within a couple of days. Forward planning for winter 2014/15 has been completed with health partners, as part of the refresh of the Surge and Resilience plan, as described previously by Jane Taylor.

Ruth Lake, Adult Social Care

Public Health

Last year was a mild 'flu year'. For this next winter, Public health are preparing for a normal or possibly higher than normal flu year – although there is no intelligence to suggest it will be high.

Preparation for this year includes a new nasal spray flu vaccine pilot by Public Health England. Leicester's pilot is the biggest in country, involving primary and secondary school children aged 5 – 13. With regards to workforce vaccinations, Public Health are using some one-off funding to offer free flu vaccines to front line social care staff in all sectors, where this cost is usually the responsibility of employers, to increase uptake.

With regards the update on excess seasonal deaths, this data is published nationally by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and currently latest finalised local authority data available only covers up to 2011/12 (published 26 Nov 2013).

Some provisional data from ONS indicates there was an increase in winter deaths nationally over 2012/13, which was largely expected given the relatively cold winter experienced that year. However, the local authority level data, usually presented as a 5 year rolling average, was not calculated by the ONS for this period.

The provisional national data covering the period of winter 2013/14 is scheduled for release in Nov-Dec 2014. The verified data and potential Local Authority level data won't be available for some considerable time after that.

Ivan Browne, Public Health

Update to the Executive Response to the Winter Plan Scrutiny Report

There continues to be regular partnership discussions through a range of forums to ensure good links for winter planning.

The hackathon event referred to had social care data available, alongside other council data. However the hackathon has to select themes to work on and has chosen different areas to explore. If a specific 'challenge' is noted for future events, Jay Hardman would be happy to facilitate this being put into the process.

Work on extended hours for services continues via the Better Care Fund and positive impacts can be seen, for example in the numbers of people being supported outside of usual hours via Integrated Crisis Response Services.

Officers are presently working with colleagues in the County, to oversee a Cabinet Office funded initiative operated by the Royal Voluntary Service (RVS). Called Hospital 2 Home, the project went live on 1st October and is due to finish at the end of March 2015. The project matches older people in hospital with a trained volunteer, who befriends them and supports them through the discharge process. This is done by assisting with transport home and to follow up medical appointments, undertaking a warm home check, providing a welcome home food hamper if necessary and maintains a befriending relationship with the person for up to 6 weeks. During that time, the older person can be signposted to other services as necessary and if support is still required at the end of the 6-week period, the RVS's Good Neighbour scheme will follow on. The project is to be evaluated through the 6-month period by the Nuffield Trust.

Ruth Lake, Adult Social Care