



Case Study: Surge Management



The North of England Commissioning Support Unit (NECS) has developed a whole systems approach to working with its customers and providers of health and social care services in collaboration with Clinical Commissioning Groups across the North East and North Cumbria. A dedicated team was established to develop and implement a service for monitoring, providing intelligence and delivering tools and techniques to operationally manage surge pressures.

Description

The risk of a surge in activity and associated pressures can happen at any time of year. This brings a number of challenges to all health and social care organisations that affect service delivery, including the balance of emergency and elective activity, together with the flow of patients from admission to secondary care through to discharge. This is heightened during the winter months when people are more susceptible to illness.

The Surge Management service covers North Cumbria and the North East. By adopting a whole systems approach to working with Commissioners and Providers of Health and Social Care services NECS have developed an effective package for monitoring, providing intelligence and delivering tools and techniques to operationally manage surge pressures.

Via a dedicated command and control hub manned by staff with the skills and expertise in managing pressures, the team work with all Health and Social Care providers to manage day to day pressures within the health and social care economy and support at times of surges in activity on behalf of the CCGs utilising multiple tools to gather intelligence.

The Tasks

The Surge team works across North Cumbria and the North East to deliver the operational management of surge and escalation throughout the region. The team provides daily support to CCGs on high levels of activity, pressures and actions taken which involve working with all providers to manage pressures in the system and ensure escalation frameworks are on track and includes daily updates to the CCG appointed on-call Director appraising them of issues and updates to NHS England for a regional overview of pressures.

Central to NECS, whole systems approach to managing surge pressures include:

- The Flight Deck, which is a web portal providing a strategic overview of capacity within hospitals across the North East, number of ambulances on site including their time of arrival and current call volume for NHS 111/ 999 and bed capacity across the region
- Leading daily provider teleconferences, utilising daily situation reports (SITREP) and real time data to co-ordinate a system wide response to surge pressures, in line with agreed escalation plans. Providing the system with regular support and delivering regular updates on system-wide, local and regional pressures and agreed remedial actions

- Providing daily updates to NHS England on North Cumbria and North East pressures and remedial actions.
- A web based communication and information sharing website which enables NECS to co-ordinate communications, provide information on current pressures and remedial actions and to share key policies, procedures and escalation plans.



For further information please contact:

Gill Carton Email: g.carton@nhs.net Email: 01642 745057



Case Study: Surge Management

Results

The Surge Team manage winter pressures in a holistic, cross-boundary way that enables the central management and co-ordination of emergency care pressures. Working with real time data, NECS closely monitors growing pressures and works with stakeholders to manage operational capacity. This initiative won NECS the Value in Healthcare Award with the Health Service Journal. Outcomes reported in the first year in operation reported that ambulance handover delays reduced by 39% and beds unavailable to DTOCs reduced by 21%.

In addition to this:

- By establishing a single on call rota across North East CCGs, significant efficiency and cost savings were achieved for CCGs. The team provides a daily report to the Director on-Call.
- Daily teleconference calls are held during winter months and take place on a weekly basis over the rest of the year. These are attended by patient flow managers and Operations and Winter Leads from Acute Trusts and the Ambulance Service plus LA and CCG colleagues to fully understand pressures and provide a system overview on escalation levels across North Cumbria and the North East. Attendees are now aware of the structure of the calls and information requirements.
- Following comments from users, the surge management website was updated and includes key documents, resource links, copies of plans and contacts and on-call rotas. This was relaunched in 2017.

- Year on year the region has observed increased ambulance to hospital handover delays and diverts across the North East and Flight Deck allows real-time management of this by NEAS and Trusts. There is ongoing development work to improve the frequency and detail of reporting through flight deck.
- Through collation of real time data, winter pressures and capacity are monitored effectively. In addition to this, annual reports are issued to CCGs analysing performance of their associated Trust(s) this winter period in comparison to previous years, then providing further detail and explanation if requested. The ongoing comparison means results of work done can be monitored for A&E performance and ambulance delays.
- Since its inception the Surge team has organised and facilitated annual master classes and winter debriefs for the region. These are attended by delegates from CCGs, Acute and Ambulance Trusts along with NHS England and partner organisations. Speakers have included include NHS England Directors and NHS Improvement, plus local colleagues sharing good practice. Events are held centrally and include group sessions encouraging discussion between local A&E Delivery Boards and are developed on the basis of feedback received.
- The central support has demonstrated the benefits of 'at scale' services. Regional concordats for ambulance handover and DTOCs for the region were agreed at the winter debrief in September 2016.

Utilising these tools, the Surge Management Team supports North Cumbria and the North East at times of Surge, providing support at times of need to the system. They allow the team to provide a systematic examination of information to identify potential risks and issues emerging for the coming weeks and support with mitigating actions with providers. This includes a Regional Divert Policy, agreed Regional SITREP Reporting, Regional Choice and Repatriation Policies

An independent evaluation carried out in 2017 asked for stakeholder feedback to the service provided. Responses included:

- "There was mainly consensus on the fact that the Surge Team helps to spread good practice in service delivery through its role as a "hub": "They are aware of things that go well and don't go so well, so the opportunity to share that good practice comes centrally rather than relying on the organisation that has done it to share it."
- "Surge is like a knowledge hub. It would take me a lot of points of contact to find out where to go [for some information]... they respond quickly."
- "The Surge Team's winter and summer de-briefs have been very positive conversations that have allowed us to talk about some of the bigger impacts e.g. DToC and ambulance handovers. The Surge Team has highlighted this and work has come off the back of that."
- "From some of the workshop stuff, definitely there have been learnings. We've done things on social care around blocked beds and this is now embedded in new protocols."

For further information please contact:

Gill Carton

Email: g.carton@nhs.net

Email: 01642 745057