

## **Surgical Services Centre Winter Plan 2014/15**

The Surgical Services Centre (SSC) has robust operational arrangements in place to manage day to day and surge pressures within the Centre using 'Bronze command' and the surgical bed management team.

- **Maximising capacity**

During the winter months capacity issues arise from the increased admission of patients from medical specialties and from staff sickness or as a result of severe weather conditions. This can affect the delivery of the elective programme and we have plans to manage our capacity through the opening of additional funded beds (3 beds were opened on Ward 35 and a further 5 beds were opened on Ward 5 by October 2014).

Using our bed management team, we will maximise our use of all capacity and we manage staff issues across the surgical floor with weekly roster meetings to ensure that all wards and departments are staffed safely. Beds are closed for staffing issues as a last resort where all other avenues have been exhausted and no cover is available from within the Centre, from other clinical centres or from NHSP. Staff have been actively encouraged to sign up to NHSP to give us the best chance at achieving safe staffing throughout the year but especially during winter pressures.

Our transformational work streams are on-going and aim to reduce the number of avoidable surgical admissions using ambulatory care clinics in general surgery and networking with GP and community colleagues to care for patient in or close to the their own homes where this is possible. The pilot has yielded good results in avoiding admitting some patients. Ambulatory care clinics will be rolled out to Urology in Q4 of 2014.

Weekly meetings to monitor our admissions are a permanent feature of how we do business so that we monitor our demand on our wards and our demand on critical care areas (particularly GHDU). Surges are identified in advance and action plans are put in place to minimise surge where possible. Bed capacity and or staffing pressures in the critical care areas will affect our ability to admit to these areas when required and will potentially impact on our elective programme and compliance with access targets.

- **Maximising staff availability (including Christmas /New Year arrangements)**

The Wards for SSC are staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to provide a service all year round. Rostering has been completed for the Christmas and New Year periods and any known or longstanding long term sickness has been taken into account and backfilled where appropriate.

The out-patient departments will work as normal apart from the bank holidays.

## **Managing surge**

SSC has a bed management team in place Monday to Friday 7:00am to 7:30pm with Clinical Sisters taking the role at weekends. Bronze command is in place Mon-Fri 8:00am to 8:00pm and the centre participates in the Silver command rota with Managing Director and Lead Nurse. The senior management team manage leave so that a senior presence is always available for urgent advice. SSC participate in FHN Senior Manager for Patient Flow rota to provide support on FHN site.

The team provide appropriate support for twice daily bed meetings, managing day to day and surge issues and supporting discharges across the surgical wards. The team have the appropriate authority to make decisions and take actions where necessary and also to escalate where necessary.

## **Business Continuity arrangements**

There is a business continuity plan in place for all areas of SSC and this has been tested in year with industrial action taken by various unions. Reporting and sit rep reporting is well established and communication is maintained within the centre using the central management team and admin support. In severe adverse weather conditions, staff are aware of the actions they need to take and plans for keeping areas staffed and safe are triggered by adverse weather bulletins from NHS England.

## **Key risks/challenges**

The surges resulting from medical admissions which overflow to surgical areas is a risk to our business continuity and impede our ability to achieve access targets which are vital to the Trust's recovery plan with Monitor. We understand that Integrated medical care centre has its own plans to manage surge and we will work together with them to ease the pressure of winter surge wherever we can.

Lack of capacity in critical care areas will impact on delivery of our elective programme and non compliance of access targets.

Sickness continues to be an issue for SSC but this is being proactively managed and we have robust support from HR. Audits of high rates of sickness are carried out to ensure procedures and policies are being adhered to.

Band 5 Nurse recruitment continues to be an issue. Head of Nursing for Centre is working with Director of Nursing looking at viable alternatives.

There are some hot spots in Centre for Medical staffing which are being resolved as quickly as recruitment allows. Locum staff are being used only as last resort and to support safe care for patients.

Nurse Practitioners for Wards would help support medical staffing issues and timely discharge and this is being worked up – at present this would be a cost pressure.