



Greater Manchester Weekly Winter Stakeholder Briefing

4th January 2024 – Issue 6

This weekly briefing is intended to update stakeholders on how services in Greater Manchester are performing and how we work together to manage demand and provide care and support to the public.

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Media statement

Mark Fisher, chief executive of NHS Greater Manchester

“We are seeing some significant pressure on our A&Es at this current time. Hospitals across Greater Manchester continue to face the added pressures that winter bring, and we ask that people only come to A&E if it’s life-threatening or a serious injury so that we can treat those who are most seriously unwell or injured. Care and support are available from your GP practice, urgent dental and eye services, local pharmacy as well as NHS 111, including NHS 111 online.

“We know that long waits are frustrating. We continue to prioritise patients with the highest level of need and staff are doing everything they can to care for everyone who needs them as quickly and safely as possible. We would like to thank them whilst they work incredibly hard to maintain services.”

Weekly narrative

This week has been extremely pressured across all health and care services, including primary care, with the first two days of the week seeing particularly high demand following the Bank Holidays. All hospitals have seen high numbers of attendances, with demand and patient acuity being significant. Growing winter pressures from respiratory illnesses, sickness bugs and other seasonal illnesses tend to rise during January, impacting the demand for care and hospital beds. A few hospitals have been at the highest level of escalation in recent days.

Six consecutive days of industrial action comes at one of our busiest periods. We have prepared extensively for this round of action, maintaining key services, and ensuring safe rosters with consultant cover. Some appointments and planned operations have been postponed, with some already rearranged.

People should come forward for help if they need, using NHS 111 to help if they aren’t sure which service to use.

Primary care data

There are approximately 1,800 primary care providers, with a workforce of around 22,000.

- ✚ Dentistry – of 229 practices reporting, 32% of dental practices are feeling a significant or very significant increase in demand, with a further 20% of practices facing extreme demand.
- ✚ General practice - of 272 practices reporting, 30% of GP practices are feeling a significant or very significant increase in demand, with a further 2% of practices facing extreme demand.



- ✚ Optometry - of 79 practices reporting, 8% of optical sites are feeling a significant or very significant increase in demand, with a further 3% of practices facing extreme demand.
- ✚ Pharmacy – of 108 pharmacies reporting, 27% of sites are feeling significantly challenged and 10% are feeling challenged but coping.

Note, work is underway to encourage more practices to use the pulse check so that support can be provided where appropriate.

Further information on investment into local primary care this winter: we have invested approximately £2million into additional primary care services this winter such as expanding our community urgent eye service, urgent dental care, minor ailment schemes at local pharmacies and GP surge hubs to provide more appointments.

Urgent and emergency care data

NHS England publish a weekly online report each Thursday showing verified data across provider organisations including all hospital trusts. You can access the latest urgent and emergency care 'sit rep' here: [Statistics » Urgent and Emergency Care Daily Situation Reports 2023-24 \(england.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/statistics/urgent-and-emergency-care-daily-situation-reports-2023-24).

- ✚ For the week 25th to 31st December 2023, there were 23,948 attendances; of which type 1 attendances were 17,197. Attendances are higher than the previous report, however, type 1 attendances are slightly lower.
- ✚ Hospital bed occupancy across Greater Manchester acute trusts has been on average for the period 88%, with one day peaking at 89.9%.
- ✚ Paediatric services remain challenged, but bed occupancy has seen a recent reduction from the previous 90% position, with high-dependency unit capacity continuing to see an improved position.
- ✚ Attendances at emergency departments for mental health conditions have remained stable however the system is significantly constrained by a lack of mental health bed capacity in Greater Manchester, as well as nationally.
- ✚ Ambulance activity has been high with 4,771 ambulances attending Greater Manchester hospitals, an increase on the previous week.
- ✚ Definitions on types of attendance can be found using this [link](#).

Hospital discharge data

The discharge figures are a snapshot in time provided for the weekly brief to illustrate both demand and pressure. These figures will be shared weekly.

- ✚ There were 836 people medically fit for discharge from acute trusts as of 3rd January.
- ✚ This week (28th December to 3rd January) there were 834 admissions to hospital across Greater Manchester and 933 discharges.

Figures may be affected by the Bank Holidays.



Industrial action

Junior doctors at some GP practices and all NHS hospitals are taking industrial action now. We are in what will be the longest stretch of industrial action by junior doctors to date. This started at 7am on 3rd January 2024 and will conclude at 7am on 9th January 2024.

We have planned for this and can assure people we are still on hand to help. Our emergency, urgent care and maternity services are available for patients who need them. We are prioritising resources to protect emergency treatment, critical care, neonatal care, maternity, and trauma, and ensure we prioritise patients who have waited the longest for urgent elective care and some cancer surgery. Services are working under immense pressure.

- ✚ It is important that the public do not hesitate to come forward to access care if they need it. NHS 111 online should be their first port of call if they need urgent health advice on days of strike action.
- ✚ More information is available on our dedicated industrial action webpage: [Information for the public on industrial action \(strikes\) | Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnership \(gmintegratedcare.org.uk\)](https://gmintegratedcare.org.uk).
- ✚ People should attend all appointments including at GP practices unless they have been contacted to not attend.
- ✚ [While You Wait](#) has information for people waiting for planned hospital treatment including for staff. People can find advice on how to manage their physical and mental health while they wait.

Useful information

Where to get help from? Get to know where to go:

NHS 111:

NHS Greater Manchester is urging members of the public to use [NHS 111 Online](#) for all non-emergency healthcare needs, in the first instance, unless the issue concerns a child under 5, when they should call 111. Deaf people or people with hearing loss can dial 18001 111 on a textphone or use the Relay UK app (which can be downloaded from Apple's App Store or Google Play Store). [NHS 111 Online](#) can help if:

- ✚ You need help but don't know who to call,
- ✚ How to find general health information and advice,
- ✚ You are ill and need to be told what to do next, and
- ✚ How to get an emergency supply of your prescribed medicine.

**GP:**

Contact your GP surgery for appointments about illnesses or injuries that won't go away. Many GPs offer an out-of-hours service later in the evening and early morning. If you phone your GP during this time, please listen to the answerphone message for information on how to access GP out-of-hours.

Pharmacy:

Lots of illnesses can also be managed safely at home, or with a trip to a local pharmacist. There are pharmacies open late in to the night and very early in the morning. Find your nearest one here: [Find a pharmacy - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk).

Urgent dental care:

The Greater Manchester Urgent Dental Care Service is available from 8am to 10pm every day including weekends for severe dental pain and infection. People can call **0333 332 3800** to be assessed by a healthcare professional, who can provide self-care advice or book a face-to-face appointment, if needed.

Urgent eye care:

Free urgent eyecare is available across all 10 areas of Greater Manchester. If you have a sudden and urgent problem with your eyes, you can contact a local practice to get an appointment: [NHS Greater Manchester Community Urgent Eye Care Service \(CUES\) - Primary Eyecare Services](#).

Mental health:

For free urgent mental health support, people can contact one of these 24/7 helplines – they're available to anyone of any age:

- ✚ Bolton, Manchester, Salford, Trafford, and Wigan 0800 953 0285 (freephone).
- ✚ Bury, Heywood, Middleton & Rochdale, Oldham, Stockport, and Tameside 0800 014 9995 (freephone).

If there's an immediate risk of danger to life, you should ring 999.

People can also help themselves and others by:

- ✚ Ordering repeat prescriptions in plenty of time so they don't run out of medication or other essential items.
- ✚ Avoiding hospital if suffering Norovirus-type symptoms such as diarrhoea and vomiting, or with cold or flu-like symptoms.
- ✚ Keeping a well-stocked medicine cabinet at home including painkillers, indigestion relief, antihistamines for mild allergies, and anti-diarrhoea (diarrhoea relief) tablets.
- ✚ Having the flu vaccine if eligible.