

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde	Paper No. 25/23
Meeting:	NHSGGC Board Meeting
Meeting Date:	25 February 2025
Title:	Adverse Weather – Debrief
Sponsoring Director:	Bea von Wissmann, Interim Deputy DPH
Report Author:	Sally Johnston, Head of Civil Contingencies

1. Purpose

The purpose of the attached paper is to: update the Board on the NHSGGC response to Storm Eowyn.

2. Executive Summary

The paper can be summarised as follows:

Storm Éowyn was a powerful storm which affected Ireland and the United Kingdom on 24th January 2025.

The NHSGGC response to and recovery from Storm Eowyn is set out, with respect to coordination, services business continuity, staff and patient communication, facilities and estates response and service performance and recovery.

The structured debrief, and actions already committed to or underway based on learning from the response are highlighted.

3. Recommendations

The NHS Board is asked to consider the following recommendations:

To note the NHSGGC response to and recovery from Storm Eowyn, the structured debrief that is being undertaken, and actions based on learning from the response.

4. Response Required

This paper is presented for **assurance**

5. Impact Assessment

The impact of this paper on NHSGGC's corporate aims, approach to equality and diversity and environmental impact are assessed as follows: (

- Better Health Neutral impact
- Better Care Positive impact
- Better Value Neutral impact
- Better Workplace Positive impact
- Equality & Diversity Neutral impact
- Environment Neutral impact

6. Engagement & Communications

The issues addressed in this paper were subject to the following engagement and communications activity: Structured de-brief responses from services and members of the co-ordination group.

7. Governance Route

This paper has been previously considered by the following groups as part of its development: Storm Eowyn Co-ordination group.

8. Date Prepared & Issued

Paper prepared on: 13/02/2025

Paper issued on: 17/02/2025

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1. Purpose

To update the Board on the NHSGGC response to Storm Eowyn including recovery and structured debrief.

2. Background

Storm Éowyn was a powerful storm which affected Ireland and the United Kingdom on 24th January 2025. The Met Office warned of significant disruption and dangerous conditions due to high winds, forecast in the central belt region of Scotland for Friday 24th January.

A RED warning (high likelihood of high impact) for wind was issued on 23th January at 10am for Friday, 24th January between 10am and 5pm, expected to affect the central belt region as well as the Scottish Borders and Dumfries and Galloway. The conditions were set to cause widespread disruption to transport and the power network, with the potential for inland gusts of up to 90mph and winds of over 100mph on exposed coasts and hills. In addition to the Red warning, an AMBER warning (low likelihood of high impacts) for wind was also in place on from 6am onwards on Friday, 24th January until 6am on Saturday 25th January.

On the morning of 23th January 2025, the First Minister of Scotland, activated the Scottish Government Resilience Room (SGoRR) to monitor the rapidly developing situation and threat, and also to begin to co-ordinate the Scottish Government response to the storm.

Ahead of the storm, Transport Scotland indicated severe disruption to the travel network. On 23th January 2025 at 1.30pm, Police Scotland advised people to avoid travel in the areas affected by the red warning and to expect a high risk of disruption in the areas affected by the wider amber warning for wind. In light of the deteriorating weather conditions and associated disruption, in consultation with the Scottish Government and Northern Ireland Executive, the Cabinet Office issued an Emergency Alert to all compatible

mobile phones of people affected by the warnings in Northern Ireland and parts of Scotland at 5:50pm on 23th January 2025.

In line with the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) and the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (Contingency Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2005, NHSGGC as a Category 1 Responder, needs to be able to respond to a range of incidents, including severe weather, while maintaining our critical services to patients at predefined levels. NHSGGC must plan and be prepared to respond and adapt to the short and long-term consequences of these various disruptive challenges. Business Continuity Plans are in place at Sector, HSCP and service level and are an essential tool in establishing our organisation's resilience to anticipate, prepare, prevent, respond to and recover from a range of disruptive events, regardless of the cause or which part of the business is impacted. In line with the Board "Adverse Weather Action Plan" we activated our internal command and control structure to coordinate the board response to the incoming storm.

3. Assessment

3.1 Coordination

3.1.1 NHSGGC Command and Control

The Board command and control activated on the 23rd January 2025 with its first coordination group meeting taking place at 1.30pm, with subsequent touch points and meetings taking place throughout the days of the 23rd, 24th and 25th January 2025. Acute services and HSCPs established their internal command structure to coordinate the response to the ongoing storm.

3.1.2 Multi-agency Coordination

A Strategic Coordination Centre (SCC) was stood up by Police Scotland in Glasgow, to coordinate the multi-agency response through successful collaboration and sharing of information to promote effective decision making. NHSGGC was represented by the interim deputy Director of Public Health representing the Executive Lead for Resilience, and the Head of Civil Contingencies. The first meeting of the SCC took place at 7am on the morning of the 24th January 2025 with subsequent meetings taking place throughout the day and into the 25th January 2025.

In addition to the SCC both Glasgow and East Dunbartonshire Local Resilience Partnership (LRP), the West LRP activated in response mode. NHSGGC was represented on both meeting groups by the Head of Civil Contingencies. The first meeting of both groups was held on the 23rd January 2025 and throughout the 24th January 2025.

3.2 Services

In the first meeting of the NHSGGC coordination group at 1:30pm on 23 January 2025, advice was expected to be issued to NHS boards for consistency in service provision and communication across affected areas following the first meeting of SGoRR, which was being held simultaneously. It was decided to prepare for the need to stand down non-urgent planned care, and activation of business continuity arrangements including staffing arrangements in line with the Adverse Weather Policy. Contact was made with neighbouring Health Boards to ensure a consistent approach.

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Communication from the NHS Scotland Chief Operating Officer was received following the first meeting of SGoRR, that there would be no national advice on service provision. For the safety of staff and patients the decision was made by the second NHSGGC coordination group meeting held at 3:30pm on 23 January, to enact preparations and cancel all non-urgent outpatients within the Acute and community services, this would also free up staff to be redeployed to other areas of the system, if required.

3.3 Communications

3.3.1 Staff communication

The timing of the issue of communications to NHSGGC staff and patients was due to the timing of communication that there would be no national advice on level of service provision. Once received, adverse weather advice was promptly issued to all staff via a Core Brief on 23 January at 4:15pm (Appendix A), in line with DL (2022) 35 on NHS Scotland: Interim National Arrangements for Adverse Weather, and the link to the complementary NHSGGC guidance. Staff were discouraged from travelling at the peak of the storm.

3.3.2 Patient Communication

Plans had been put in place through the Medical Records department, and the team reacted quickly once the decision was confirmed which services needed to be stood down, to inform patients of any cancellation with alternative appointments being issued for additional clinics being put in place. The facilitation of virtual consultations where appropriate was used to maintain patient care. The communication with patients was via text message or telephone call where necessary. Clinical services also contacted patients where appropriate. In addition, a public message was issued via NHSGGC digital channels (IPN, facebook, Instagram and X) to confirm the restricted essential clinical programme that was going ahead. Media also picked up the message and issued via their channels.

3.4 Facilities and Estates

Contingency plans were established to deploy staff both during and outside of regular hours to address any structural damage to the estate. Transport hubs were activated to support staff facing transportation issues, ensuring they could reach their destinations safely. Additionally, welfare arrangements, including essential provisions and accommodation, were made available for staff on duty to ensure their well-being during the adverse weather conditions.

3.5 Performance and service recovery

During the Red warning on Friday 24 January, there were 302 attendances to NHSGGC Emergency Departments (EDs), which was fewer than normal for a Friday. 104 patients attended at the QEUH, 74 at GRI, 58 at RAH, 22 IRH and 44 at RHC. There were 124 patients in the EDs with performance at 75.5%. QEUH at 66.3% with all other sites performing above 70%. 221 patients were admitted from these EDs with 142 patients discharged. In addition, there were also 29 patients who had attended our minor injury units.

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Patient flow out of the hospital was impacted by the weather and the associated effect on SAS and general transport options available and any discharges were subject to risk assessment on a case by case basis. Sites worked with SAS and private ambulance providers to prepare plans into the weekend to maintain the safe discharge of patients.

Augmented services were planned over the weekend (25th and 26th February) to compensate for the reduced activity on Friday 24th January, especially in relation to oncology and dialysis.

4. Conclusions

4.1 Debrief

A structured debrief including review of the NHSGGC Adverse Weather Plan is being undertaken, to allow incorporation of learning into existing plans and procedures for severe weather events. Key learning from the response has centred on facilitating earlier communication, and consistent application of the adverse weather policy. Actions thus already committed to or underway include:

- National Forum for NHS Scotland Executive Leads for Resilience to discuss a consistent approach across boards on service restrictions for red adverse weather warnings, for incorporation into service business continuity plans, and facilitating earlier communication.
- Development of an NHSGGC FAQ to complement the Adverse Weather policy, which would assist staff and managers to understand how to apply the policy consistently across the Board area in a given set of circumstances.
- Proactive communication will be scheduled annually at the start of winter on Adverse Weather Policy and FAQ.
- Dependent on the event, communication to staff will use a variety of methods utilising existing huddles and direct communication via line management alongside the use of core brief, and urgent emails.

A verbal update on any further key findings, will be shared at the meeting if further debrief responses are being received in the meantime.

5. Recommendations

The Board is asked to note the NHSGGC response to and recovery from Storm Eowyn, the structured debrief that is being undertaken, and actions based on learning from the response.

6. Implementation

A structured debrief is being undertaken to allow incorporation of learning into existing plans and procedures to severe weather events. Following the results, the Board Resilience Group will have the opportunity to consider improvements to plans and procedures for future similar events.

7. Evaluation

The structured debrief is an opportunity for teams and individuals to have views on the effectiveness of our planning and response during the severe weather event. The gathered information will enable NHSGGC to benefit from the lessons learned for future events.

Appendix A



A red weather warning is in place for the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde area and West of Scotland for Friday 24th January 2025 between the following times:

10.00am to 7.00pm with a peak at 11.00am till 2.00pm.

Police Scotland travel advice has been issued for this period advising that travel should be avoided.

In light of this advice, our adverse weather policy is enacted. For those staff who have the ability to work from home, we encourage you to do so.

For patient and client facing staff, we ask to you follow the policy and discuss with your local manager any difficulties you may face with travel arrangements.

A reduced elective programme, including outpatients, will be in place to support staff care for inpatients and urgent cases.

Additional Guidance on adverse weather is also available for employees of NHSGGC. Please refer to the links below for more information:

[UK weather warnings - Met Office](#)

[Traffic Scotland | Trunk road traffic updates & route planner](#)

[NHS Scotland Interim National Arrangements for Adverse Weather](#)

Thank you for your support at this time.