

**Emergency Planning Annual Report, 2022 and future
emergency planning**

Chief Operating Officer

This report highlights the work of the Emergency Planning Response and Recovery Team during 2022. It summarises:

- Incidents
- Training & Exercises
- Planning
- Infectious Diseases & Infection Control
- Partnerships

A video will also be played during the meeting to support the enclosed report.

Which Committees have reviewed the information prior to Board submission?

N/A

Reason for submission to the Board (decision, discussion, information, assurance etc.) ¹

Information and assurance

¹ All information received by the Board should pass at least one of the tests from 'The Intelligent Board' & 'Safe in the knowledge: How do NHS Trust Boards ensure safe care for their patients': the information prompts relevant & constructive challenge; the information supports informed decision-making; the information is effective in providing early warning of potential problems; the information reflects the experiences of users & services; the information develops Directors' understanding of the Trust & its performance

Emergency Planning & Response Annual Report 2022



1. Introduction

- 1.1** This report summarises the work of the Emergency Planning and Response Team at MTW for the calendar year ending December 31st 2022. As a Category 1 Responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 has specific duties in relation to Emergency planning as well other contractual duties from NHS England. The Trusts Accountable Emergency Officer remains the Chief Operating Officer.
- 1.2** The team welcomed Fire Safety & Security in to the directorate and these two services will submit a separate annual report to Board in due course.
- 1.3** The Trust were fully compliant against the NHS England EPRR Core standards during 2022.

2. Training & Exercising

- 2.1** The team have undertaken training across the county both with Chemical, Biological & Radiation incidents for acute trusts colleagues at Medway and Darent Valley Hospital and radiation incidents with Kent Community Health at Minor Injury Units and Urgent treatment Centres.
- 2.2** Command Foundation and refresher training has continued along with Loggist training.
- 2.3** Exercise Ragdoll 5 continued our joint exercises with Kent Police in another table top exercise.
- 2.4** A number of communications exercises have been carried out including with ICB and SECAMB colleagues.
- 2.5** A number of training videos are now ready including new evacuation processes and business continuity, in addition videos highlighting key parts of the emergency response are hosted on the Trust learning platform and are being rolled out via QR codes in departments so staff can access quickly via mobile phones.

3. Business Continuity

- 3.1** The planned water shut off at TWH has been a good opportunity to review business continuity across the site.
- 3.2** The Business Continuity Project supporting divisions to review local service business continuity plans is well underway.
- 3.3** Almost all the disruptions experienced by the Trust in 2022 presented Business Continuity Challenges and highlighted the need for divisional management teams to review and update plans and to invest time during service development in Business Continuity planning.

4. Community Safety

- 4.1** The team have continued to represent the NHS at Safety Advisory Groups attempting to promote admission avoidance and to look at NHS business continuity. This year was especially busy because of additional events because of the Platinum Jubilee.

5. Climate Change & Adverse Weather

- 5.1** This year started with the warmest New Year's Day on record and a year marked by weather extremes. The continuing effects of extreme weather require further action and investment by the Trust.

- 5.2 Red Warning – High Winds** – the arrival of Storm Eunice on February 18th with wind speeds above 100mph saw the Met Office issue its first red warning for high winds in Kent. This was a challenge as it was in the middle of the day with a lot of temporary structures on the sites some of which started to structural weaken along with trees and fencing and become a safety hazard. The year also saw several yellow warnings for wind.
- 5.3 Red Warning – Extreme Heat** – the Summer heatwave presented challenges especially as the heatwave approached an unprecedented 40 degrees. The Trusts estate is not designed to withstand these sorts of high temperatures and despite the best efforts of hiring air conditioning units some areas exceeded a workable temperature.

It is important the organisation does not consider this a one off and appropriate extra resources are set aside for heat related infrastructure especially in design stages of projects. Some of the estate will always superheat even in a normal Summer and portable air conditioning presents hazards in clinical areas. The Executive Team received a report into the key issues and proposed actions which the Director of Estates and Director of EPRR will take forward.

- 5.4 Snow** – in December snow arrived following a Yellow warning causing traffic disruption as people left town centres after Christmas shopping. Snow and ice clearance on the Sunday night proved difficult along with transportation of staff through treacherous conditions. A review of snow clearing contracts has been carried out by Estates. In addition, some new equipment is being purchased. The 4WD plan is being reviewed along with accommodation and a new plan will be available for consultation shortly.

6. Plans

- 6.1** A complete review of all response plans is underway. This includes the combining of the major incident, business continuity and critical incident plans to make it easier to use. In addition, a new adverse weather plan is being constructed to replace separate plans for winter weather, heatwave, flooding and other climate related responses.
- 6.2** A complete review of site evacuation plans is underway including training packages and new evacuation bags.

7. Infectious Diseases & Infection Control

- 7.1 Monkeypox** – outbreaks of monkeypox occurred in the UK from May 2022 – working with Infection Control, Sexual Health and the core services division plans were put in to place for a vaccination hub covering Kent & Medway.
- 7.2 Combined Pandemic Plan** – Following on from COVID 19 a combined pandemic plan is now in production – this recognises some core actions that need to occur regardless of the cause of the pandemic. This will also encompass lessons identified during COVID 19 and recognise that the previous planning for an influenza pandemic needed to be broader to encompass other infections.
- 7.3 Covid 19 Public Inquiry** – the team worked with KCHFT to ensure the organisations were prepared for the upcoming COVID 19 public inquiry. This included cataloguing archives and files centrally.
- 7.4** Support was provided to ED and paediatrics during the recent increase in attendances due to concerns about Strep A infections.

8. Utilities

- 8.1** During the heat and during the freezing weather water supplies failed across large parts of the Trusts catchment area. The team worked with South East Water to ensure stocks of bottled water were available to discharge patients and maintain patient flow. On two occasions supplies to the hospital at MGH were under threat and required additional contingency measures.

9. VIP

- 9.1** The Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer visited Maidstone Hospital in February. Our plans and established relationships with Police and partners meant they had confidence in our organisation.

10. Other Incidents

- 10.1** In April an electrical fire broke out in the Emergency Department at TWH requiring attendance of the Fire Brigade – there were no injuries and services returned to normal quickly. Plans to continue ED services worked well.
- 10.2 Operation London Bridge**
The sad death of HM Queen Elizabeth II in September saw plans activated to mark the historic occasion. Planning for the Coronation, in particular public events is underway.
- 10.3 Industrial Action**
During the last half of the year the focus was industrial action planning. Although the Trust did not experience industrial action among its teams, planning gathered pace including the response to the Ambulance Service strike.
- 10.4 Mass Fatalities**
In December a number of people tragically died crossing the channel and the Trust supported the Police and HM Coroner as part of plans to manage mass fatalities and disaster victim identification processes.
- 10.5** The team have assisted in contingencies for the construction of the Medical School at Tunbridge Wells Hospital.

11. Partnerships

- 11.1** In the Summer we hosted Police Cadets at Tunbridge Wells Hospital and were visited by one of the Assistant Chief Constables who also visited and thanked some of our security team.
- 11.2** Long standing partnerships with both HEMS and HM Coastguard along with Kent Fire & Rescue, Kent Police and other services have paid dividends in terms of planning and response this year.
- 11.3** The team also hosted visits from other EPRR teams from across the country.
- 11.4** The team worked with external partners, security and fire safety to host two staff awareness days promoting personal safety, resilience and planning for a range of scenarios.
- 11.5** The team have also supported front line teams during periods of operational pressure.

12. Conclusion

12.1 The Trust remains well prepared for emergencies and meets all the requirements of the NHS England Core Standards.

12.2 The Trust should focus on four areas in 2023.

- The impact of severe weather events. These events are increasing and becoming more severe in terms of impact.
- Business continuity for disruptions at divisional level – especially where services move or are redesigned.
- A deep dive in to communications resilience to ensure the organisation is maximising the use of technology but not over reliant on one system such as mobile phones.
- Highways gridlock – working with partners to ensure access to sites even during times of significant highways disruption.

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