Toughest ever winter for Health and Social Care

A joint Statement from the Gwent Regional Partnership Board (which includes Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, as well as Newport, Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen and Monmouthshire councils) and the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust:

We know that people in Gwent are rightly concerned about the availability of, and delays to, health and social care services in the region and it’s important that we recognise that the coming months are going to be significantly more challenging.

To further explain why the situation is so difficult at the moment, across the health and social care system we are facing multiple challenges. Covid is still present and public health experts are forecasting a resurgence of the flu virus. There is a significant increase in the number of people in Gwent requiring services and we have unprecedented staffing challenges in respect of a depleted workforce to provide these services. These challenges are not unique to Gwent as well publicised in the UK media.

You can help us in the first instance. We would ask people to look out for, and check in on, family members and neighbours – particularly those who are frail, vulnerable or living on their own. If you can support your family members, we would ask that you do this as the limited social care resources need to be targeted at those in greatest need.

Where possible, home is always the best place to be for people to be and we need to do all we can to prevent our loved ones getting to a stage where they need hospital care. At this time it is more important than ever that we come together as a community to make sure people are kept safe, warm, nourished.

If you are ill or injured and unsure of what to do, or where to go, then the NHS Wales 111 online symptom checker is a great place to start for help and advice. We would also strongly encourage those who are eligible to take up the flu and covid booster vaccines – we know the vaccines provide effective protection and it is never too late to come forward.

This is a very difficult winter for everyone – not least our much-valued health and social care staff, who are working so hard to provide the best care possible to people . We have seen examples in recent weeks of people taking out their frustrations by being aggressive or rude to members of staff, but this is unacceptable and won’t be tolerated – we would appeal to people to be kind to these people whose lives are centred around caring for others.

Thank you for your understanding help, and support.