

**Report to:** East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)

**Date of meeting:** 11 December 2025

**By:** Deputy Chief Executive

**Title:** NHS Sussex Winter Plan 2025/26

**Purpose:** To provide an overview of the NHS Sussex Winter Plan 2025/26.

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Committee is recommended to consider and comment on the report.**

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### **1. Background**

1.1. Winter planning is an annual national requirement of the NHS to ensure that the local health and social care system has sufficient plans in place to effectively manage the capacity and demand pressures anticipated during the Winter period. The Sussex System Winter Plan is a whole system health and social care plan, recognising the interdependencies of the system to meet the needs of the local population. The Plan period runs this year from November 2025 to April 2026 and was approved by the NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board.

1.2. Winter Plans are developed with input from partners across the system including local authorities, providers, commissioners and the voluntary sector. Underpinning the overarching Sussex system winter plan, each provider Trust has developed their own winter plans and have contributed to the system wide demand and capacity modelling.

1.3. This report highlights the main elements of the plan. It should be noted that the system has continued to see increased demand across primary, secondary, community and mental health services. Over the winter months this can become increasingly challenging as there are seasonally driven increases in illness such as acute respiratory illness, flu, Covid-19, and norovirus, together with the impact of cold weather and the ongoing impact from the cost-of-living pressures which constrains the ability of the most vulnerable in our population to keep themselves well.

### **2. Supporting information**

2.1. The key focus of the NHS Sussex plan is action to support people to stay well and to maintain patient safety and experience. There is a focus on four key pillars as part of this:

- Acute and in hospital care
- Primary and community care
- Sound clinical and operational management; and
- Oversight, governance and escalation

2.2. The plan also includes analysis of demand and capacity modelling to close bed gaps, learning from the Winter Plan 2024/25, targets for Winter 2025/26, communications and engagement plans, and an assessment of risks to the successful delivery of the plan, including wider structural changes in the health system.

2.3. The full Winter Plan as approved by the ICB is attached as **Appendix 1** for information, which highlights the Sussex-wide approaches and aims to provide information to HOSC that the

health and social care needs of the local population will be met over the winter period. This includes summaries of risks and lessons learned from the winter 2024/25 in its final pages.

### **3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations**

3.1 HOSC is recommended to consider and comment on the NHS Sussex Winter Plan, and agree whether it wishes to receive a feedback report at its June meeting.

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