

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde	Paper No. 25/57
Meeting:	NHSGGC Board Meeting
Meeting Date:	29 April 2025
Title:	Adverse Weather – Debrief
Sponsoring Director:	Dr Emilia Crighton, Director of Public Health
Report Author:	Sally Johnston, Head of Civil Contingencies

1. Purpose

The purpose of the attached paper is:

To provide an update to the Board on the Storm Eowyn response structured debrief.

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. A summary of the NHSGGC response to Storm Eowyn including recovery was provided to the [February Board](#).

This paper provides the requested update to the Board on the structured debrief carried out, and emergent themes, to facilitate NHSGGC review of the planning and response to severe weather events, based on the lessons learnt.

3. Recommendations

The Board is asked to note the NHSGGC lessons identified from the structured debrief, and their integration into local and national emergency preparedness planning.

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: (

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|------------------------|------------------------|
| • Better Health | <u>Neutral</u> impact |
| • Better Care | <u>Positive</u> impact |
| • Better Value | <u>Neutral</u> impact |
| • Better Workplace | <u>Positive</u> impact |
| • Equality & Diversity | <u>Neutral</u> impact |
| • Environment | <u>Neutral</u> 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, staffside input and reflections from the members of the co-ordination group,

7. Governance Route

This paper was approved by Informal Directors, prior to presentation to the April Board meeting.

8. Date Prepared & Issued

Paper prepared on: 24/03/2025

Paper issued on: 17/04/2025

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1. Purpose

To provide an update to the Board on the Storm Eowyn response structured debrief.

2. Background

Storm Éowyn was a powerful storm which affected Ireland and the United Kingdom on 24 January 2025. A red warning representing a likely danger to life and severe disruption was issued by the Met Office. A summary of the NHSGGC response to Storm Eowyn including recovery was provided to the [February Board](#).

A structured debrief was carried out, to facilitate NHSGGC review of the planning and response to severe weather events, based on the lessons learnt.

3. Assessment

3.1 Format of debrief

A standard debrief format was conducted utilising a questionnaire, asking:

1. What aspects of the planning and response went well?
2. What aspects of the planning and response did not go well and why?
3. What would your key recommendation be for your own role/dept/division?
4. What would your key recommendation be for the event in general?

The debrief questionnaire was sent to the members of the board coordination group for onward dissemination within their relevant areas/ teams. This gave individuals, departments/directorates an opportunity to have their views on the effectiveness of our planning and response during Storm Éowyn.

In total eight debrief forms were received from Corporate Services, Acute and HSCP, in addition to reflections by the members of the board coordination group. Staffside feedback was provided by the Employee Director as also set out by the Chair of the Board in February. The debrief responses were reviewed, and lessons identified for integration into the NHSGGC Adverse Weather response.

3.2 Debrief themes

Lessons identified from the debrief grouped into emergent themes on coordination, communication and business continuity planning.

3.2.1 Coordination

Standing up the NHSGGC command and control structure, and representation by NHSGGC at the Glasgow and East Dunbartonshire Local Resilience Partnership and West Local Resilience Partnership, and at the national Strategic Coordination Centre, facilitated shared situational awareness and coordination of the response. On the day of the storm, regular touch points strengthened planning across the sectors.

Lessons identified focussed on:

- The need to consider the declaration of a critical incident during any future red warning, or other event with likely risk to life and severe disruption for staff and patients.
- The need to facilitate early and coordinated planning and communication of service changes, including through potential pre-agreed regional or national approach to standing down non-essential services during a red alert.
- Extending planning to amber periods, when high winds could still have had an impact.
- Ensuring staffside input into the coordination group.

3.2.2 Communication

Once decisions had been made on which services to stand down or maintain, communication to staff, patients and the public was made promptly.

Lessons identified focussed on:

- Ensuring that communications reach all staff swiftly, with alternative methods (e.g. texts/ phone calls) for those without ready access to e-mail or other digital means.
- Communications being explicit that a red warning represents a likely danger to life and severe disruption, and empowering local decision making based on risk, with an escalation to senior managers for agreement.
- Ensuring the Adverse Weather Policy is clearly understood by all managers and is consistently implemented within teams.
- Ensuring any detriment to staff through the inconsistent application of the policy is remedied.
- Clarification on what patient appointments should be cancelled locally by services versus cancelled centrally by health records, to avoid duplication and delays.
- The need for strong public communication to reduce unnecessary site visits during severe weather events.

3.2.3 Business continuity planning

This event highlighted that Business Continuity Plans (BCP)/contingency plans were utilised during the storm. Teams worked together and reacted quickly once the decision was confirmed which services needed to be stood down. Effective pre-planning ensured staff were prepared and knew their roles, and it was also felt staff adapted well to staff shortages by prioritising tasks and reallocating staff as needed. Staff exhibited resilience, adaptability, and a commitment to maintaining service delivery under challenging conditions. Some areas were identified for improvement within local plans.

Lessons identified focussed on:

- The need for clear protocols to be developed on service prioritisation/cancellation during a business continuity event i.e. red weather warnings, industrial action and mass power outage (including clear protocols for contacting patients and cascading communications to staff, see also 3.2.2)
- The need for clarity on which staff should attend work and how this is monitored and coordinated based on service need.

4. Conclusions

The structured debrief enabled NHSGGC to review the planning and response to the severe weather event. The lessons identified are being integrated into local as well as national emergency preparedness planning, through:

- Update of the NHSGGC Adverse Weather Plan taking account of the lessons learnt
- Development of an NHSGGC FAQ to complement the Adverse Weather policy, in partnership with staffside
- Input into national review of the Adverse Weather Policy
- Input into National Forum for NHS Scotland Executive Leads for Resilience to discuss approach on service restrictions for red adverse weather warnings
- Inclusion of adverse weather preparedness into winter planning/ communication.

5. Recommendations

The Board is asked to note the NHSGGC lessons identified from the structured debrief, and their integration into local and national emergency preparedness planning.