

Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust

Report to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Impact of Adverse Weather Conditions on the Emergency Department

Introduction

This report summarises the actions that were taken in response to the adverse weather that affected the south of England during the early part of January.

Emergency Department

Due to the icy conditions there were a high number of patients seen with broken limbs as a result of slips trips and falls.

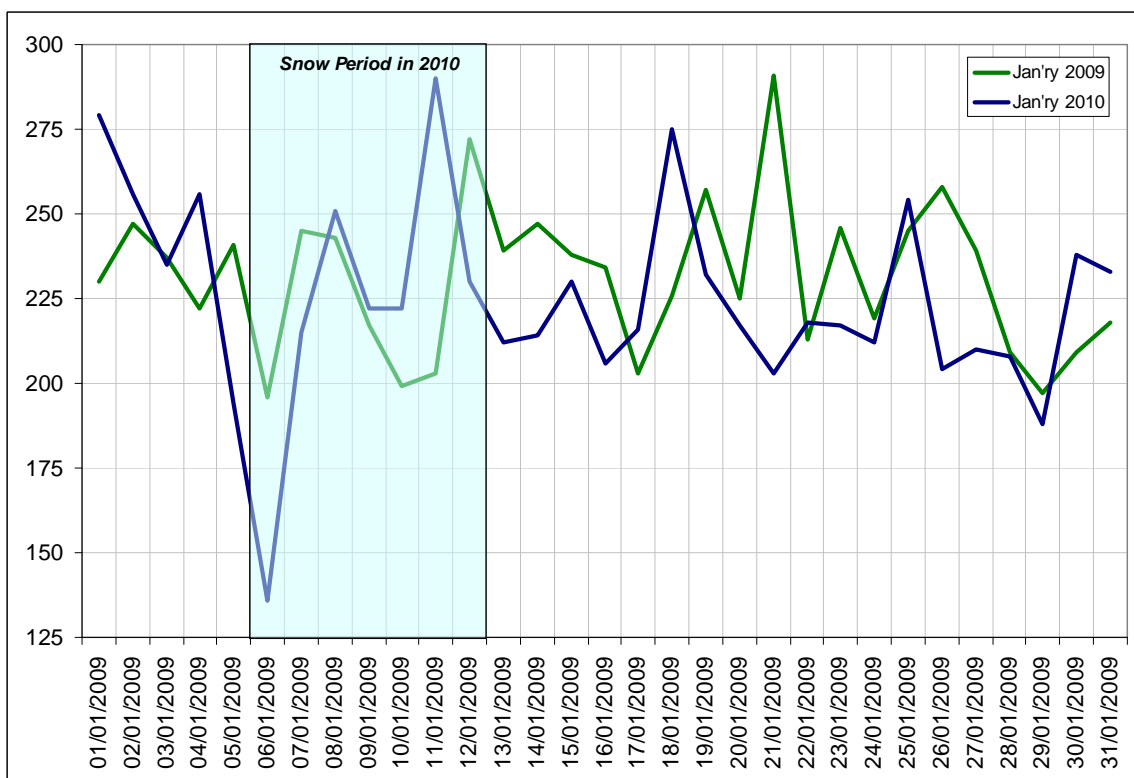
The Trauma and Orthopaedics Division mobilised a team comprising an Orthopaedic Consultant, Consultant Anaesthetist, Junior Doctor and appropriate clinical support staff to 'pull' patients with fractures from the emergency department to the fracture clinic where their fractures were treated.

In addition to this, elective (planned) Trauma and Orthopaedic work was cancelled so that resources could be diverted to where they were needed.

Other elective (planned) work was also cancelled (including outpatients clinics) so that resources could re-directed to inpatients on the wards ensuring that discharges were maintained

The Trust was able to deal with emergencies throughout the period of extreme weather and at no time were emergency services on the Queen Alexandra Site closed during this time

The chart below compares throughput in the ED during January 2010 against January 2009



Trust wide actions

The Hospital Operations Centre held 2 hourly meetings with all key staff on site (including extra operational teams) to ensure that the situation was kept under constant review and that partners (Ambulance Service, Portsmouth City Council, Hampshire Primary Care Trust and Portsmouth City Primary Care Trust) were fully informed and involved throughout. The Trust also worked closely with voluntary partners in the city such as St. Johns Ambulance.

Staff

Staff that could not get home were accommodated overnight within the QAH building and staff with 4X4 vehicles collected staff from snow bound outlying areas. Trust volunteers also contributed by making themselves available in spite of the inclement weather

Lessons learnt

As a result of this incident a wash up meeting has been held with contributions from all those involved and examples of action taken are:

- The Orthopaedic Divisional Team has now formalised the process of managing fractures
- The Director of Development has linked with Portsmouth City Council to ensure that approach roads to the QA site are cleared of snow faster
- Dedicated emergency Evec ambulance parking on the QA site during periods of adverse weather (previously at Fort Southwick)
- Store of appropriate clothing maintained for staff who unable to leave the site

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