

SBAR

NHS Lanarkshire – Allied Health Professions

Date	7/2/2021	Author	Janice McClymont, Occupational Therapy Professional Lead
Subject	Impact on Occupational Therapy Services of supporting Acute In-patient pressures and C19 Vaccination programme		

Situation

Continued support of acute hospital flow and the Covid-19 vaccination programme will further impact on occupational therapy access and waiting times across all care groups and specialties.

Background

During the initial pandemic response a significant proportion of occupational therapy service provision across specialist out-patient services, primary care, mental health/learning disability and children and young people's OT was stepped down, with staff being deployed to acute/community hospitals and community rehabilitation teams to support early discharge planning, maintain acute flow and prevent avoidable admission.

Pausing the non-critical elements of the service has seen significant impact on waiting times with legacy waits of 35 weeks in Rheumatology OT, and 33 weeks in Hand Injury OT existing after the first wave, and the number of breaches increasing in community rehab teams of up to 31.2% at Dec 2020.

Although the pandemic has resulted in variable levels of increased demand for rehabilitation across different OT care groups, all teams are reporting an increased incidence of more complex cases with higher levels of acuity, risk and need. This is particularly evident in adults and children's mental health, and in primary care OT services.

From early Jan 2021 the OT staff across acute, community rehab, and mental health teams have extended their job role to assist the wider MDT with basic nursing support and patient care. This has reduced the capacity for occupational therapy interventions, but it is acknowledged that this is an organisational priority at this time.

At 8th Feb 2021 an additional 8.7 wte registered occupational therapy staff will be deployed (in hours) to the Covid vaccination programme. It is predicted that this could extend for a 3 month period.

Training is being progressed for those staff who have offered to assist the vaccination programme outwith OT core hours, and in addition to their existing substantive posts.

Assessment

The exact impact of the additional deployment to the Covid vaccination programme on occupational therapy services is unknown, but each wte OT carries an open caseload of approx. 30-35 cases. Consequently approximately 270 cases have currently been re-allocated to alternative occupational therapy staff. This will reduce the duration and intensity of rehabilitation as staff carry larger caseloads, and it will further impact on waiting times across all teams.

To mitigate risks:

- Staff have been deployed from all OT care groups to avoid specific pressures in any one team
- Assistance has been requested from NLC/SLC OT Colleagues

- Regular triage and prioritisation of waiting lists is ongoing to support a change in risk/needs.
- Backfill via AHP Staffbank is being utilised where possible to maintain service continuity

Recommendations

Note the concerns regarding the impact of the deployment of OT staff to support acute in-patient pressures and the Covid-19 vaccination programme on OT/AHP waiting times, rehabilitation intensity and patient outcomes.

Date Tuesday, 23 February 2021