

Berkshire West - System Winter Plan 2023-24

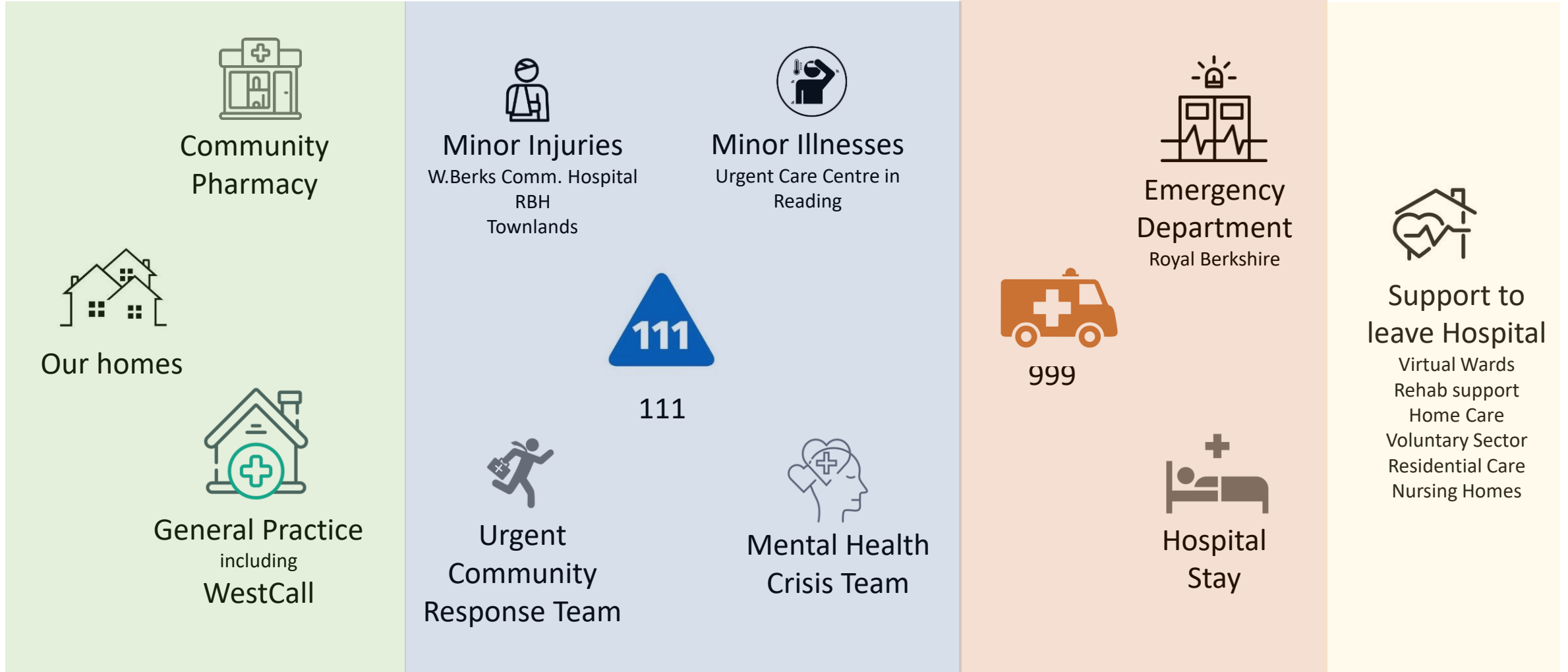
West Berkshire – Reading – Wokingham

Presentation to the West Berkshire HOSC December 2023

Introduction & Context

- Winter 22-23 was a very challenging time for health and care services across the country. The number of people attending A&E continued to rise, hospital wards continued to be very busy, and care services outside of hospital continued to face very high demand.
- In 'Berkshire West' (the area covering West Berkshire, Reading and Wokingham) we have a strong Partnership Board that brings together relevant colleagues from all key local organisations to oversee our Urgent and Emergency Care services.
- We have **collectively been working on system-wide plans for this coming winter**, starting our planning early **to ensure we are in the best possible position to meet predicted seasonal demand**.
- Where additional funding has been made available to support services this winter, we have come together to agree how best to use these to maximise the positive benefits for our residents during the most pressing time of year for health and care services.

What is the Urgent and Emergency Care System?



A range of services designed to meet varying levels of urgent health need

Winter Plans 23/24

All parts of the Urgent and Emergency Care System have developed and implemented plans to manage seasonal demand during the winter period. Key elements of these plans include:

- Additional **appointment capacity within General Practice**, including via WestCall for 'out of hours'
- Promoting our **Urgent Care Centre pilot in Broad Street Mall**, Reading, for minor illnesses
- Reviewing the **use of our community hospital beds** to ensure patients can move to a bed closer to home as soon as they no longer need acute care
- Enhancing our **'virtual ward' service** to enable people to return home with the aid of technology so our skilled clinicians can continue to remotely monitor their recovery, or to avoid a hospital stay in the first place
- Using **additional national social care funding** to retain our social care workforce, secure additional care hours, and bolster brokerage arrangements (note: lower level of national funding received this year compared to 22/23)
- Rolling out our **Covid and Flu vaccination programme** to protect our most vulnerable residents this winter

Industrial Action – Dec 2023 and Jan 2024

Recent announcements confirmed two more Junior Doctor strikes taking place this winter:

- 7am Wednesday 20th Dec to 7am Saturday 23rd Dec
- 7am Wednesday 3rd Jan to 7am Tuesday 9th Jan

We are working with system partners to ensure plans are in place keep services safe during these further periods of industrial actions.



Health workers protest on a picket line as junior and senior doctors in England take part in a joint strike action for the first time, outside St Thomas's Hospital in London, Britain September 20, 2023. REUTERS/Susannah Ireland/File Photo [Acquire Licensing Rights](#)

Help and Support

- We want to encourage all residents who are invited to have a **Covid and Flu vaccines** to please take this up
- Our winter campaign is focusing on **self-care and preparedness**. Remember to order and collect repeat prescriptions and inhalers ahead of the festive period
- General Practice isn't just GPs, there are lots of **skilled clinicians** that can and will help you. We've produced some videos to help explain this more clearly - <https://youtu.be/WxtNWNwGrPM>
- Please **only go to the Emergency Department in an emergency**. For urgent but not life-threatening concerns please call 111 – they can direct you to most appropriate service including booking you into slots e.g. Minor Injury Unit at West Berks Community Hospital, or the Urgent Care Centre (UCC) in Reading
- The **UCC in Reading is open 8am – 8pm 7 days a week** for urgent but not life threatening illness

