

# Media Information

For immediate use



6<sup>th</sup> January 2010

## **SEVERE WEATHER IMPACTS ON NHS BORDERS SERVICES**

The severe weather conditions across the Scottish Borders are having an impact on some of the services provided by NHS Borders. NHS Borders are advising patients and staff to follow Lothian & Borders Police advise on travel.

The latest weather conditions indicate this will be prolonged period of extreme winter weather, with low forecasts which will present a risk for people in the Borders travelling and accessing NHS Borders services.

To minimise the risks to staff and patients travelling during this severe weather, NHS Borders has reviewed its services and is suspending or cancelling some services for a short period until conditions improve.

**Borders General Hospital:** All routine out-patient appointments are cancelled. Any urgent patients will be contacted by the hospital directly and this will only be in exceptional circumstances.

**Community Hospitals:** All day hospitals and out patients are cancelled.

**Health Centres:** All routine appointments are cancelled. Home visits are affected and patients expecting a home visit should be contacted by the health care professional directly. If they have not heard from their health care professional/nurse by midday today and have an urgent health care need they should contact their local health centre.

Calum Campbell, Chief Executive of NHS Borders said: "NHS Borders is well prepared to deal with adverse weather conditions. We have contingency plans in place, including an Adverse Weather Policy for staff, to mitigate the impact of severe weather on our services.

"We are working closely with partner agencies to monitor the situation and identify and address any service issues we anticipate as a result of this extreme winter weather. We are continually reviewing our staffing and service provision, particularly our priority services and at-risk patients with access issues, to ensure we continue to maintain these key services during this period of bad weather.

"Any decision taken to suspend a service is not taken lightly and is continually reviewed according to the latest weather conditions. The health and well being of patients and staff is our main priority, and the decision to suspend a service is to ensure they do not have to travel in severe weather. Staff and patients are encouraged to attend work or services that are open while it is safe to do so, and should monitor local radio or contact the service or place of work if they have any queries.

"I want to particularly thank all our staff for the exceptional efforts they are making through this time.

"While NHS Borders has special arrangements in place with partner agencies to continue to provide assistance to people across the Borders, people are also encouraged to work together and support each other during this period, particularly if you are aware of vulnerable people in your neighbourhood who many require some additional help or need additional supplies."

Members of the public are advised not to travel for anything other than essential purposes and people are encouraged to check weather conditions before travelling. If travel is essential, then you should be well prepared and travel carefully, according to the conditions of the road. Extreme care should be taken on minor roads.

People are encouraged to listen to local radio and check NHS Borders' website ([www.nhsborders.org.uk](http://www.nhsborders.org.uk)) for further service updates during the rest of the week.

Scottish Borders Council:

[www.scotborders.gov.uk](http://www.scotborders.gov.uk)

The Council's Social Work Emergency Duty Team can be contacted on 01896 752 111.

More detailed weather forecasts are available on the Met Office on [www.metoffice.gov.uk](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk)

**Ends**

**Contacts:**

For further information, contact Public Involvement & Communications on 01896 825589 or 825591