

Press Release

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The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges is, for the first time, issuing guidance to clinicians and hospital managers about the best way to cope with the additional pressure on the healthcare system caused by the colder weather. Based on real-life examples of how some hospitals cope with winter pressures, the ten point plan provides practical remedies to help with the increase in admissions that always happen at this time of year. They include:

- Asking all hospital staff to recognise that ‘it is everyone’s problem’ and is not just limited to staff working in Emergency Departments even though that is where the pressure is most visible.
- Reminding doctors that patient care comes before targets.
- Managers too should lend a hand when and if they can. The simple act of, ‘Organising a pizza delivery for hard-pressed doctors and nurses can buy an awful lot of goodwill.’

With much of the health and social care system operating at or near to full capacity for much of the year, the additional strain on resources caused increased number of admissions of frail and elderly patients with ‘flu, injuries, heart attacks and strokes, as well as children with upper respiratory tract infections, can take hospitals to ‘breaking point’. The Academy recognises that the guidance will not fix the problems, but may go some way towards providing practical help.

**Professor Carrie MacEwen, Chair of the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges said,** ‘The quality of care patients receive must always be our first concern. All the signs are there that it is going to be a tough winter for everyone, that’s patients as well as all hospital staff, not just doctors. With the health and social care system already under-resourced we must all do what we can to help. Many of our members have produced practical guidance, this, along with the work that has been produced by NHS Improvement and the Care Quality Commission is brought together in this guidance.’

Ends

Notes:

- For every 1°C fall in temperature below 5°C hospitals see a 1% increase in admissions.
- The Royal College of Emergency Medicine’s [winter flow project](#) shows that the cold weather is beginning to have an impact on hospital admissions.
- The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges brings together the voices of its 24 member colleges and faculties for over-arching and generic issues around healthcare.
- For more information contact Max Prangnell, Communications Director on 0773 436 1055 or 02392 413000 or the Academy switchboard on 0207 490 6810