

Note for Mr Lake following a supplementary question asked at the Reading Health & Wellbeing Board meeting held on 17 March 2023

Effective and meaningful engagement with our Place based partners and local communities is a key priority for Berkshire West Place - as it is for the whole of the BOB ICB.

We are committed to progressing and sustaining existing relationships and creating and developing new ones by empowering community representatives and providing a range of Place based public-facing engagement facilities, both in-person (face to face) and via digital channels. We recognise that different groups of people and different communities need to be supported to engage with us in different ways and we will tailor our approach to ensure our engagement is easily accessed and open to all.

We recognise there is much to do to develop our work with communities and people both at Place and across the BOB health and care system. BOB ICB is currently reviewing resources and capability to ensure the right team is in place to deliver this important work across the whole of the BOB system, and to develop a culture of working with our citizens and patients across the organisation.

Developments over the last few months include the establishment a high-level strategy for working with people and communities, which sets out proposed principles for engagement and the aims for engagement for the ICB. Representatives from all five Healthwatch groups across BOB, the BOB Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise Alliance (VCSE) and NHS Trust lead governors were involved in the development of the strategy. It was also made available on BOB's engagement site to enable partners and members of the public to submit comments.

A framework looking at how to put the strategy principles into practice has been designed. The main elements of the framework are to develop a consultation platform; further develop relationships with our partners to use their channels to promote awareness and drive traffic toward the consultation platform; develop a representative citizens' panel, and develop and work closely with our partners to reach and engage with specific groups and communities.

The ICB has invested in a new digital engagement platform ['Your Voice in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire & Berkshire West'](#) so people can have their say on projects and proposals related to health and care. People can register to be regular users of the platform and can be kept informed on work of the ICB and partners. The platform was launched in December 2022 and already has 822 participants registered and over the next year there will be a membership campaign to raise awareness of the site and get more people on board with the work of the ICB.

We recognise the value of Healthwatch's contributions for our engagement and involvement ambitions and ensuring we can meet the needs of our population. At Berkshire West Place we meet local Healthwatch representatives regularly including a monthly meeting to gain their insights and public feedback to help inform our plans. And at BOB ICB level there is close working with the five Healthwatch groups across our system. Healthwatch have previously supported place-based projects, provided essential access to patient voices, and given detailed analysis and recommendations. An example of this was the suggestion of a sign language interpreter joining our online public meetings during our engagement for developing the BOB ICP strategic priorities.

There is close working with the VCSE (voluntary and community sector) which has a range of skills, experience and a network of vital contacts - people and communities who promote mutual aid and advocacy and provide professional service. Our work with the VCSE is aimed at developing a better understanding of peoples' and community's needs, experiences and aspirations for health, care, and wellbeing. Through the BOB VCSE Alliance we will be able to work with community leaders, reaching out to those affected by inequalities - strengthening relationships, building trust, and enabling the voice of people and communities to be heard. The Alliance will allow us to explore ways to reach and engage with communities who have poorer experiences and outcomes and then tailor our approach to engagement depending on the needs of the audience rather than trying to create a one-size-fits-all approach.

BOB ICB is in the process of setting up a Citizens' Panel to act as a core engagement resource. The initial aim is to recruit approximately 1,500 members. The panel will be used to answer broad surveys and to segment them and create smaller focus groups to consider specific issues in more detail.

Working with our local communities

The Berkshire West Place Primary Care service engages with PPGs in a number of ways. Where possible, they attend PPG and Patient Voice meetings to update on ICB developments, share best practice, receive updates on developments within their area and discuss ways of widening their engagement within their communities. Over the last year there have been keynote speakers at these sessions including the ICB directors and RBH colleagues. A regular e-newsletter is produced jointly by the RBH and ICB and distributed to the PPGs, Practice staff and a wider audience including parish councils, Healthwatch, VSCO and other community partners.

There is a requirement on Primary Care Networks to submit plans on improving access / patient experience by the end of this month and we would hope this will include the approaches they will take to working with their PPGs. The Berkshire West Place Primary Care team will review these plans to ensure they have a focus on patient experience and engagement and will look at how to support the PCNs with this work.

Joint Forward Plan

This sets out how we will deliver national NHS commitments and recommendations and to inform this work the ICB held a workshop which brought together system colleagues from across BOB to explore how we will achieve our integrated care ambitions together. Over 70 representatives from our NHS Trusts, primary care, local government, the Academic Science Health Network, voluntary and community sector and Healthwatch came together to come up with bold ideas for how we meet the challenges facing health and care and improve the health and wellbeing of our local population.

Belinda Seston

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Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board