



**Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire
and Berkshire West**
Integrated Care Board

Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire & Berkshire West Update Briefing
September 2023

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1. NHS Joint Forward Plan

The first [Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire & Berkshire West \(BOB\) NHS Joint Forward Plan](#) was published on 30 June 2023 and formerly agreed by BOB Integrated Care Board in July. It sets out a delivery plan that explains how the BOB Integrated Care System (BOB ICS) will arrange and/or provide NHS services to meet our population's physical and mental health needs, particularly with respect to the ambitions of the BOB [Integrated Care Strategy](#). The plan focuses on actions that will be delivered by the NHS in BOB (the BOB ICB, NHS Trusts, primary care, etc). As we develop as a system it is expected that future joint forward plans may reflect more fully our wider partnership activities.

In developing our Joint Forward Plan, we have identified a small number of system challenges that, if addressed, we believe will have the greatest impact on ensuring our services more effectively meet the needs of people in BOB. Meeting these challenges will require long term change, working in new ways—with greater collaboration across system partners and with our communities—and will require a fundamental change in focus, from a system based on treating illness to one that prioritises prevention and keeping people healthy in their communities.

Below shows the progress made over the past few months with our system challenges as outlined in the plan:

- ***Inequalities challenge***: in 2023/24 we aim to strengthen our approach to population health management (PHM) through the creation of an Integrated Data Set across our providers to support decision making and identify more opportunities for targeted support. We have integrated data from Buckinghamshire and Berkshire West already accessible in our connected care tool. Oxfordshire's data is expected to be included before the end of the calendar year. PHM will be enabled by the implementation of the shared care record. PHM tools will be available in a similar timeline.

To support our Inequalities and Prevention programme, Place Directors have led the production of plans to use £4m of funding for 23/24 that has been distributed between Places (£8m in total over two years).

- **Model of Care Challenge:** we have collectively recognised the importance of shifting our focus to a more preventative and community-based approach for health and care services. In 2023/24 we are committed to defining a more integrated approach to primary care, through the delivery of a primary care strategy building on recommendations of the 2022 Fuller Stocktake. Worked has commenced on the primary care strategy, with engagement events held through the place infrastructure; This will include plans to deliver the Primary Care Access and Recovery Plan. Joining up primary care and other services closer to patients' homes will be essential to improve the quality of care, reduce the number of hospital attendances, reduce wait times and drive efficiency and productivity.
- **User experience challenge:** as a system we are aware that some people wait longer than they would like to access the care and support they need. We have committed to reviewing the demand and capacity, on a pathway basis, of some services identified by the Elective Care Board and Acute Provider Collaborative teams. The initial clinical areas are ENT, Urology and outpatients. The development of our acute provider collaborative programme will mitigate some of our resource constraints and deliver system wide productivity and efficiency improvements. Additionally, we are increasing community diagnostic centre (CDC) utilisation and developing pathways to support GP direct access to imaging services, cardiology and respiratory testing, and pathology.
- **Sustainability challenge:** Recognising the collective challenges of the financial environment and ambition to do more to support our staff and volunteers, we have committed to developing joined up, longer term plans for both areas. We have set up the ICS efficiency collaboration Group (IECG) to identify areas of productivity and efficiency, supporting the journey to a balanced position and have developed a high-level model to support the scenario planning. In July we approved the BOB Interim People Plan 2023. The five-year People plan will build on these ambitions and take full account of national ambitions set out in the NHS long term workforce plan, published on 30 June. Together these will describe how we will achieve financial balance and a stable, resilient workforce.

2. Industrial Action

This month, for the first time since of NHS strikes started last year, junior doctors and consultants took industrial action at the same time. BMA consultants took part in a two-day strike from 7am on Tuesday 19 September to 7am Thursday 21 September. And junior doctors took part in three-day strike from 7am on Wednesday 20 September to 7am on Saturday 23 September.

During the two days of consultant doctor industrial action, the BMA advised that consultants would provide 'Christmas Day' cover, meaning they continued to provide all emergency services, but routine services will to be impacted.

Although our local hospitals continue to provide urgent and emergency care, many appointments and elective inpatient and day case procedures had to be rescheduled. Appointments before and after the days of industrial action were also affected.

All patients who are affected during the strikes are being contacted directly by the Trust they are receiving their care. If patients aren't contacted, they are advised to attend their appointment as planned.

The NHS is doing everything possible to prioritise patients with the highest clinical needs, including patients who have already waited a long time for their treatment and cancer and dialysis patients.

Public communications has and will continue to focus on signposting to services and raising awareness of NHS 111 online with the following messages to our residents:

- The NHS wants to see a resolution as soon as possible to the strikes, but ultimately pay is a matter for the Government and the trade unions.
- Maintaining safe patient care is our priority. In addition, we recognise and respect the right of NHS staff to take part in lawful industrial action and will work collaboratively with staff and union partners to minimise the effects on patients and staff.
- When talking to patients or the public, we want them to know that regardless of any action taking place, people who need care should continue to come forward as normal, especially in emergency and life-saving cases.
- People should go to 111 online for help and advice and call 999 if it is a life-threatening emergency.
- Patients with appointments booked on strike days will be contacted by the NHS if their appointment needs to be rescheduled. If they have not been contacted, they should attend their appointment as planned.
- Continue to access GPs as normal
- Make sure prescriptions are up to date
- Stay safe and look out for vulnerable family and friends
- NHS staff are working extremely hard during a very challenging time – please do treat them with respect. We appreciate people's understanding and co-operation during this time.

More industrial action is planned in October with BMA consultants and junior doctors striking together on 2, 3, and 4 of the month, again with '*Christmas day*' levels of cover.

The impact of industrial action cannot be underestimated; 14,007 occasions of staff participation in strikes resulting in at least 16,940 outpatient attendances, 2,572 elective and 972 community appointment cancelled and rearranged. This represents around 20% of capacity within our Trusts¹. The on-going action also has significant financial implications, is creating tension between staff groups, staff are fatigued and sadly at times our administration teams in Trusts are experiencing unacceptable abuse from patients when re-scheduling appointments and procedures.

¹ Data up to the end of July 2023.

The ICB continues to work with partners across the NHS and care sector to mitigate against the effects of industrial action ensuring services remain safe. We continue to work with our local trusts to ensure mitigations are in place and any mutual aid between trusts is facilitated and agreed in advance of the industrial action.

3. ICB Executive Director Appointments

Several ICB Executive Director appointments have been made recently including Nick Broughton as Interim Chief Executive; Hannah Iqbal as Chief Strategy and Partnerships Officer; Raj Bhamber as Chief People Officer and Sarah Adair as Acting Director of Communications & Engagement. Tori Ottley Groom will also join the ICB at the end of October as Chief Digital and Information Officer.

4. ICB Board Meeting

The BOB ICB held its board meeting in public on 19 September; papers are available here: <https://www.bucksoxonberksw.icb.nhs.uk/about-us/board-meetings/board-papers/>

Items of note included:

- Chief Executive & Directors [Report](#)
- [Response](#) to letter from NHS England relating to the verdict in the trial of Lucy Letby
- BOB ICB [Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23](#)

5. COVID -19 and Flu Vaccination Campaign

The Covid and Flu autumn vaccination program was accelerated, following the identification of a new COVID-19 variant as per [NHS England](#) and [UK Health Security Agency](#) guidance. It commenced on 11 September. Eligible cohorts have been invited to book via the National Booking Service, or by direct invite to their Primary Care Network from 18 September.

A communication campaign is underway to promote autumn vaccinations to eligible cohorts through established routes and share materials and updates with Place communications partners regularly throughout the program.

Our communications action plan (part of winter communications) will be coordinated and delivered across the system to reach specific communities i.e., those with an underlying health condition that puts them at higher risk, and groups of low uptake in previous vaccination campaigns: these include minority ethnic groups, people living in geographical areas of deprivation, those with learning disabilities, and people with a serious mental illness.

Alongside national materials, local resources will be produced (translated, easy read, video, pictorial) to be delivered via channels previously identified as successful including: GP texts, GP/ hospital digital screens, posters in waiting rooms, bus and bus stop adverts, radio, ad vans in key areas, social media (organic and paid for adverts), Place outreach channels, partner and voluntary sector networks, postcode maildrops, staff will make every contact count (MECC) and other opportunistic advertising.

6. Berkshire West Focussed Updates

- We are pleased to confirm that Helen Clark has now started as ICB Deputy Place Director for Berkshire West. This ICB investment in local leadership is in recognition of the unique nature of our 'Place' here in Berkshire West and the importance of engaging and working closely with all partners.
- Plans are progressing to utilise the £1.3m of Inequalities Funding allocated to Berkshire West (£2.6m over two years) to develop a Community Wellness Outreach Project, taking health and wellbeing support into the heart of our communities that are most in need. This initiative has been co-produced with partners via the three integrated partnership boards within the Health and Wellbeing Board governance structures across Berkshire West, and more detailed reports will be provided to each Health and Wellbeing Board during Q3 23/24.
- A Berkshire West-wide Mental Health Programme Board is being established in October 2023 to bring partners together to develop and oversee a joint programme of work to improve and enhance our mental health services for our residents in Berkshire West.
- The Reading Urgent Care Centre pilot service continues to run, offering capacity for 100 appointments per day within the health setting located in the Broad Street Mall, for residents with urgent minor illnesses. We will be undertaking a thorough review of this service during Q3 to determine future commissioning plans following the pilot period, including seeking patient and carer feedback.
- Other areas of work being undertaken include: a review of our Same Day Urgent Access services in primary and secondary care aimed to improve access for our residents; a review of our Intermediate Care Services across Berkshire West to ensure these are fully optimised; and improvement work relating to our Continuing Healthcare (CHC) services and processes in the ICB. Further updates on these programmes will be scheduled for future Health and Wellbeing Board agendas.