

## Health and Wellbeing Board Briefing Note

September 2025

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### **BOB ICB Board meetings**

The most recent BOB ICB Board meeting took place on 9 September 2025. The papers can be found on the [BOB ICB website](#) where details of future meetings are also published.

### **BOB ICB Transition Programme**

#### **Development of the Thames Valley Integrated Care Board (ICB)**

The NHS Frimley ICB and Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB) ICB are working collaboratively to establish a new strategic commissioning organisation: the Thames Valley Integrated Care Board (ICB). This transformation is part of a national programme to modernise the role of ICBs, in line with the NHS 10-Year Plan and the Model ICB Blueprint.

The new ICB will serve a population of approximately 2.49 million across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire, and will operate within a streamlined financial envelope of £19.00 per head, a 50% reduction in running costs nationally. The aim is to create a more strategic, data-driven, and locally connected organisation that improves population health outcomes and reduces inequalities.

#### **Frimley alignment with neighbouring ICBs and Local Authorities**

The new configuration requires a three-way adjustment to the current Frimley ICB footprint:

- East Berkshire will come together with the geography of BOB ICB to form a new Thames Valley ICB
- Surrey Heath and Farnham will align to Surrey and Sussex ICB
- North East Hampshire will align to Hampshire and Isle of Wight (HIOW) ICB

Aligning the geographies and local populations of Surrey Heath and Farnham with Surrey and Sussex ICB and North East Hampshire with Hampshire and Isle of Wight (HIOW) ICB will affect stakeholders differently across the current Frimley footprint. We see this as an opportunity to strengthen alignment with local government boundaries, supporting more joined-up planning and service delivery. Frimley ICB is working closely with its stakeholders and neighbouring ICBs to ensure a smooth transition and to maximise the benefits of coterminosity.

### **Clustering of ICBs and Chair Appointment**

Dr Priya Singh, currently Chair of both ICBs, has been confirmed as Chair of the Frimley and BOB ICB clustering arrangement, which will formally come into effect from 1 October 2025.

Dr Singh will ensure continuity of leadership throughout this important period of transition while ICBs move towards leaner and simpler ways of working as part of 10 Year Health Plan.

These [clustering arrangements](#) have been agreed by NHS England's Executive team and by ministers, and will allow those ICBs to harness a shared budget of sufficient size to improve efficiency and reduce running costs.

Clustering ICBs remain separate legal entities with unchanged boundaries, separate financial allocations and legal duties. Any future decisions on ICB footprints and mergers will be taken by ministers in light of the Local Government Reorganisation process.

In addition, we now have two Chief Officer roles working across both organisations.

Sarah Bellars, Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) at Frimley ICB will cover the CNO role at BOB ICB from 1 September, following the departure of Rachael Corser to Barts Health NHS Trust in London. Sarah will continue in her role as CNO at Frimley ICB.

Richard Chapman, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) at Frimley ICB, will cover the CFO post at BOB ICB from 1 October. Richard will continue as CFO for Frimley. BOB ICB's current interim CFO, Alastair Groom, will remain with the organisation until December to ensure a smooth handover.

All roles are interim and not confirmation of final appointments for a future Thames Valley ICB.

### **Staff and Stakeholder Engagement**

Considerable work has been undertaken over the past few months to design the operating model and structure of the new organisation aligned to the Model ICB Blueprint and NHS 10 Year Health Plan. Between 21–31 July, 278 staff from Frimley and BOB ICBs participated in 13 workshops, generating over 4,000 contributions. These sessions focused on the proposed new ICB's purpose, enablers, culture, and ways of working. Staff appreciated the opportunity to connect across systems, with strong alignment and mutual respect evident. There was a shared commitment to learning from each other and building a unified culture.

We have been working closely not only with staff, but also with partners and wider stakeholders to help shape the future organisation.

While conversations with stakeholders across Frimley and BOB are ongoing and continue to inform our development, we've also completed an initial phase of formal engagement.

Stakeholder engagement is vital; it helps ensure that the new ICB is shaped by local insight and expertise. It will allow us to build on existing partnerships and effective ways of working, and ensure we're aligned with local priorities, governance structures, and the needs of our communities.

A letter and information pack were sent to a wide range of stakeholders including:

- Local NHS Trusts
- Primary Care Leadership
- Local Authorities including Scrutiny Committees and Health and Wellbeing Boards
- Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector
- Healthwatch
- Academic, research and innovation organisations
- MPs

We received feedback from 40 partner organisations, including NHS providers, local authorities, public health teams, patient groups, VCSE alliances, Healthwatch, and other system partners. Many submitted detailed supporting letters and documents alongside their responses.

Key themes from this engagement have been compiled into reports and shared with senior leadership teams and the Joint Transition Programme design team. These insights are directly informing the development of the ICB's operating model and strategic priorities.

We extend our sincere thanks to all staff, partners, and stakeholders across the Frimley and BOB systems for their invaluable contributions. Their insights are helping to shape the future Thames Valley ICB.

## **Next steps**

Next steps include further refinement of the ICBs functions and development of the new ICB's operating model and associated structures. A timeline for a staff consultation and further formal engagement with stakeholders on the operating model of the ICB is yet to be agreed.

While we are enthusiastic about the direction of travel, we recognise that our plans are still in development and subject to approval by the Secretary of State. We also remain responsive to national guidance and external factors, which may shape the final form of the new organisation. We see this as an opportunity to stay flexible, collaborative, and aligned with the evolving needs of our system and wider NHS.

## **Resident Doctors Industrial Action**

Resident doctor (formerly known as junior doctors) members of the British Medical Association took part in industrial action from 7am on Friday 25 July until 7am on Wednesday 30 July.

The NHS trusts affected by this action in our area were:

- Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust
- Oxford University Hospitals NHS FT
- Oxford Health NHS FT
- Royal Berkshire NHS FT
- Berkshire Healthcare NHS FT

Based on early estimates, more than 10,000 extra patients received their care during the BMA strike compared with the previous industrial action (27 June 2024 – 02 July 2024).

The NHS took a more robust approach during the latest round of industrial action, with staff working round the clock to keep services open for patients.

The NHS maintained 93% of planned care during the action meaning operations, tests and procedures were carried out despite the disruption, as well as dealing with urgent and emergency cases.

Early data indicates that less than a third of resident doctors chose to strike with the number of strikers down by 7.5% (1,243) compared to the previous round of industrial action with most resident doctors choosing to join the NHS-wide effort to keep the services open.

## **Community Equipment Provider Change**

BOB ICB worked at pace throughout July with all Local Authorities in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire and health partners to move to a new social care and community equipment provider from the start of August.

Community equipment includes daily living aids to support patients in their own homes and those being discharged from hospital, such as hospital beds, hoists and mobility aids, continence supplies and digital aids.

The contract is now with Millbrook Healthcare, following the liquidation of the previous supplier, NRS Healthcare.

Currently, equipment supplies are restricted to essential items while the new contract becomes fully operational. This may take up to three months, but local contingencies are in place to support patients who need equipment so they can be discharged from hospital and are safe at home.

There is more information, including links to local authority websites, on the [BOB ICB website](#)

## Winter Vaccines Campaign Support

BOB ICB is preparing for the winter flu season by promoting early protection among colleagues, health and care partners, residents and patients.

**Flu booster:** 2 and 3-year-olds, school age children and pregnant women are the first cohorts to be offered the flu vaccine in early September. Cohorts also include frontline health and social care staff (who can self-declare if their organisation is not offering vaccinations), unpaid carers, people aged 65+, and those with long term health conditions. Read more here: [Immunisation and vaccination - Stay Well \(staywell-bob.nhs.uk\)](#)

**Covid-19 booster:** starting in early October, eligible cohorts will again be invited by the NHS to book via the national booking system or at a GP practice or community pharmacy. The eligible cohorts are people aged 75+ or immunosuppressed aged 6 months and over. Further information available [here](#). We may also see some pop-up clinics which will be advertised as they arise.

**RSV (Respiratory syncytial virus):** this year-round vaccine programme helps to reduce the number of respiratory infections for those most at risk of complications if they become unwell. Cohorts include women from 28 weeks pregnant to protect their babies - vaccination can be accessed via maternity services or GP practice - and adults aged 75-79 years old will be vaccinated by their GP. Read more here: [Immunisation and vaccination - Stay Well \(staywell-bob.nhs.uk\)](#)

## Reducing Medicines Waste Campaign

Working with the Medicines Optimisation team, a BOB-wide public-facing campaign has rolled out to draw attention to the 640,000 litres of NHS medicines waste which were collected from our community pharmacies over 12 months (August 2024 to July 2025).

The campaign aims to publicise how everyone can help to tackle this issue, which costs the NHS nationally around £300m each year. For BOB ICB, it is estimated that we are spending approximately £10 million per year on medicines that go unused.

The recent media release attracted significant interest from broadcasters and resulted in extensive coverage including interviews with Ben Riley, Chief Medical Officer, and local community pharmacist Olivier Picard.

There was coverage from [Greatest Hits Radio](#), Heart Radio, That's TV, [BBC News Online](#), [Reading Online](#), [BBC Radio Berkshire](#) and a television feature on BBC South.

The campaign continues with social media posts and an internal staff engagement session on 9 September. In addition, details of the campaign have been shared with NHS partners, local authorities and other stakeholders (via the BOB Stakeholder Newsletter) to spread the message.