

Integrated Care Board Briefing

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent
ICB Meeting

15 May 2025

NHS Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board

This briefing aims to keep partners informed of the discussions at the NHS Integrated Care Board (ICB) meeting in public. To watch the recording and read the papers [visit the ICB website](#).

ICB Chair and Chief Executive update

- David Pearson, Chair, and Peter Axon, Chief Executive Officer, presented the report.
- The Chair paid tribute to Peter Axon and Paul Brown, Chief Finance Officer, as it was their final ICB Board meeting. The Chair shared thanks to the outstanding contribution they have made nationally and locally, including their contributions to the establishment of the Integrated Care Board.
- The Chair shared thanks to David Wakefield, Chair of University Hospital of North Midland's NHS Foundation Trust, who is stepping down in his role, and welcomed Jackie Small who is stepping into the role as interim Chair.
- The Chair also shared thanks to Alan White, the outgoing leader of Staffordshire County Council, for his ongoing service and engagement with the ICB and Integrated Care Partnership (ICP).
- The Chair welcomed councillor Ian Cooper, who has been elected as leader for Staffordshire County Council.
- The Chair referenced the Fit and Proper Person Test as an important part of the governance undertaken on Board members, noting that the process is being returned to NHS England at the end of May, and it will be reported on formally at the next Board meeting in July.
- Peter Axon commented on the ICB cost reduction work as part of the ICB Reform, stating that the ICB are working at pace to get to the deadline submission point (30 May 2025) for a clear understanding of how we will achieve cost reduction. Peter added that the pace of this work is rapid, and updates will be provided at future Board meetings.
- Peter Axon stated that there is a lot of work ongoing around the operating plan, noting the scale of the challenge as significant.
- Peter Axon added that we are in the process of creating a committee to oversee the risks and mitigations associated with failure of delivering these processes, which will be underpinned by working groups and reported on formally to the Board.

The Board thanked the Chair and Peter Axon for the report. The Board thanked executives and all staff members the rapid work being undertaken following the Blueprint and objectives for the ICB.

Local Dental plan

- Paul Edmondson-Jones, Chief Medical Officer, Sarah Jeffery, Director of Primary Care, and Tracy Cox, Associate Director of Primary Care, presented the report.
- Sarah Jeffery stated that work is ongoing locally to improve the current position, including the Local Dental Health Equity Audit which has been carried out by a consultant in dental public health.
- Sarah Jeffery noted that this has provided a wide range of data intelligence and patient feedback, which has been used to prioritise targeted action, improve access and reduce health inequalities.
- Sarah Jeffery stated that the audits have supported the identification of 12 initial priority areas with the poorest level of oral health and lowest level of access to services. Sarah noted the overall aim is to improve access to NHS dentistry across all of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, not just the 12 areas identified.

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- Sarah Jeffery advised that the increase to the rates of pay to local dentists means that we are in line with the West Midlands average, and therefore more likely to recruit and retain dentists locally over a longer period of time.
- Sarah Jeffrey stated that as per the governments guidance to ensure more urgent dentistry is available, urgent appointments will be allocated daily, and patients will be able to access this by going through a dental advice line that directs patients to the nearest dentist with same-day availability. Sarah added that this will be supported by a communications campaign so patients know where they can access urgent care.
- Sarah Jefferey added that plans also include investing more in the oral health improvement and prevention team, who will support schools with teeth brushing techniques, along with support for residents in care homes, particularly focusing on areas of deprivation.
- Sarah Jefferey concluded that in summary, the plan focuses on the following areas: To make sure the right activity is in the right place, to ensure there is earlier prevention for younger people and support for older people, and to provide easier access for people in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent to urgent care services without compromising routine activity.
- Sarah Jeffery advised that the plan has been approved through the joint commissioning arrangements of the West Midlands wide governance.

The Chair thanked Sarah Jefferey for the report. The Board asked for more information around the communications plan and messaging to the public. Sarah Jefferey assured the Board that along with a wider campaign, they are working closely with the communications team on a focused approach to identify relevant channels to reach people within the twelve priority areas identified. The Board was asked about the incentive 'golden hello' scheme and how this will ensure retention of dentists locally. Sarah Jefferey advised this is a national scheme, and the significant factor in retaining dentists locally is the increase of pay rates for dentists in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. Nadeem Ahmed, NHS Birmingham and Solihull ICB, assured the Board that conditions within the scheme outline that if practitioners were to leave before the end of their agreed period, the money given through the scheme will need to be paid back. The Board was asked how the dentistry plan will be monitored to measure progress against key performance indicators, and if plans need to be adjusted, how this will be factored in. Tracey Cox assured the Board that the team will continue to monitor data and refresh the equity audit to ensure resources are utilised effectively.

The Board endorsed and noted the recommendations presented to them.

National Planning Submission and Re-submission

- Peter Axon, Chief Executive Officer, and Paul Brown, Chief Financial Officer, presented the report.
- The Chair commented that this planning round has been incredibly challenging, noting that all partner members have engaged assertively and fully with the process.
- The Chair stated that local authority members have recorded their concerns around the scale of the ask and have reinforced the requirements for effective impact assessments to be carried out.
- The Chair added that following a full and robust discussion, the Board formally approved the 2025/2026 system plan at the closed Board meeting on 25 March. The Chair noted that as part of the submission of the plan and associated templates to NHS England, it was recognised that further work would be required to ensure that robust quality impact assessments have been completed.

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- The Chair reinforced the quality and safety of our services as paramount, with steps being taken to ensure that additional non-executive member scrutiny is deployed through the Quality and Safety Committee. The Chair noted that Julie Holder, Non-Executive Chair of the Audit Committee, will review the System Board Assurance Framework and associated risk registers to ensure that they reflect the risks presented in the planning assumptions and manage these effectively.
- The Chair noted the consideration of the internal audit role in providing added assurance around the delivery of the plan throughout the year, alongside working with NHS England to regularly review the safety and delivery of the plan.
- The Chair stated that the Board has signed off the plan, noting that it is financially balanced but contains significant risk, which requires forensic scrutiny throughout the year to ensure the objectives are delivered safely alongside financial delivery.
- Peter Axon stated that going forward, work will involve converting the plan into detailed deliverables alongside implementation, changing certain ways of working, improving quality and the transition from reactive to proactive services, all in an inclusive way across the system.
- Paul Brown shared thanks to providers and local authority colleagues in forming the plan that is within the resources but also delivers on the major objectives that were set out.
- Paul Brown added that in terms of finance, the £306m efficiency plan is almost 10% of our revenue and resource limit. Paul noted that there is a weekly process of executives coming together to look at building plans, with the level of risk reducing as the plans are being worked through.
- Paul Brown stated that ongoing work involves working through all schemes and developing quality impact assessment assessments for each, which is to be completed by the end of May.
- Paul Brown added that there are plans for reductions in the workforce that is just short of 1100 full time equivalents, and a large proportion that is aimed at reducing agency and bank staff, with the focus being a substantive workforce.
- Paul Brown also noted the challenging activity plan, which has been agreed as a system to plan for a 3% increase of volume recognising the growth of population. Paul advised this is a very significant productivity gain that the system is planning to make.

The Chair thanked Peter Axon and Paul Brown for the report. The Chair stated that as the plan moves forward, every articulated piece needs to move forward together including the quality oversight, the delivery needs and the working of the subcommittee of the Board.

The Board accepted the ask to formally sign off the system plan for 2025/2026, which is a financially balanced plan compliant with the majority of the national ambitions and targets, and to note the refreshed assurance statements that will be returned to NHS England.

Update on Intensive and Assertive Community Mental Health Care

- Elizabeth Disney, Chief Transformation Officer, and Nicola Bromage, Associate Director of Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Autism, presented the report.
- Elizabeth Disney introduced the report noting the work has been instigated nationally following a CQC special review into mental health services at Nottingham Mental Health Services, Nottingham Healthcare Foundation Trust.
- Elizabeth Disney stated the ask is to ensure there are clear policies and practices in place for patients with serious mental illness who require intensive community treatment and follow up care where engagement is a challenge.
- Nicola Bromage stated that the paper provides an update on the action plan that previously went to Board in October 2024 but additionally outlines the 10 key

recommendations for ICB's following the independent review into the care and treatment of Valdo Calocane.

- Nicola Bromage added that the paper also includes progress against those actions, along with new actions that have been picked up following the Clare Murdoch letter, and what is required in terms of implementation.
- Nicola Bromage noted that the 'staying safe from suicides' work requires trusts to implement new risk assessment procedures. Nicola advised that following a clinically led review of all ICB plans, there are recommendations in terms of good practice.
- Nicola Bromage stated that a series of webinars have taken place issuing several guiding principles to understand what an intensive, assertive outreach approach would look like. Nicola added that this includes elements around key workers, care and family engagement and multi-agency working.
- Nicola Bromage stated that a document around the Personalised Care Framework is currently out for consultation. Nicola explained that this document outlines the standards that aim to guarantee all individuals with a serious mental illness to receive a minimum level of high quality, personalised care and treatment, which will be organised and coordinated across multiple teams to inform the action plan going forward.
- Nicola Bromage stated that both Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare Trust have task and finish groups in place with a strong organisational process embedded.
- Nicola Bromage noted the delay in the 'Right Care Right Person' planning, reassuring the Board that following the National Partnership Agreement, ongoing conversations are taking place with Staffordshire Police, West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS) and the Fire and Rescue service in continuing to improve that response.
- Nicola Bromage explained that the actions which require significant investment have been put on hold, and moving forward, plans include consolidating the recent guidance and adapting plans to reflect the consultation around the Personalised Care Framework.

The Chair thanked Elizabeth Disney and Nicola Bromage for the report. The Chair asked how this will feed into assurance processes for the ICB whilst linking in local providers. Nicola Bromage responded that a deep dive has taken place with the Quality and Safety Committee and this process will continue throughout the year. Josie Spencer, Chair of the Quality and Safety Committee, added that a great amount of detailed work has taken place and shared thanks to all involved. The Board asked about the CQC reviews that are expected to take place following the actions that have been pushed back due to no additional resources. Nicola Bromage explained that the national team are correlating information around what systems have said that they need to deliver to make sure that this cohort of patients is effectively cared for. Nicola Bromage added that it is still to be determined in terms of what the future model will look like, but ongoing work will continually look at the improvements that can be made within current resources. Additionally, the Board requested more detail around timescales and numbers of people participating in training to be included within future reports. The Board noted and accepted the recommendations presented to them.

Quality and Safety Report

- Becky Scullion, Director of Nursing Quality Assurance and Improvement, presented the report.
- Becky Scullion stated that following the CQC improvements against University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust (UHNM), they have received a good rating and

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all the section 29a warning notice requirements have been lifted. Becky added that University Hospitals of Derby and Burton (UHBD) were also inspected in December 2024, and the outcome report for this is still pending.

- Becky Scullion highlighted that the working age adults and psychiatric intensive care unit at MPFT was reinspected by CQC, to which they received good ratings.
- Becky Scullion commented on the Home and Host Commissioner pilot which has been rolled out across the Integrated Care System (ICS), stating that two hospitals have opened within Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent to support the ambition of placing patients within a 50-mile radius of their home area and the compliance rate of 83%.
- Becky Scullion added that following the implementation plans set out to reduce the number of people waiting for wheelchair services, routine quality visits have been undertaken with progress being monitored. Becky noted that whilst there has been continued improvement to the waiting list over the past ten months, work is still required to strengthen the approach towards ensuring patients are waiting well.
- Becky Scullion advised that work is still ongoing around the Paediatric Hearing Programme to achieve the targets that have been set in the delivery of improvements across both MPFT and UHNM services. Becky noted that the 5-year lookback review at UHNM has now been commissioned, with the outputs following the review expected towards the end of quarter two or quarter three.
- Becky Scullion advised the Board of the alignment and close working with the efficiency working group and Finance and Performance Committee regarding the Quality Impact Assessments (QIA) process.

The Chair thanked Becky Scullion for the report. Josie Spencer echoed that the QIA outcomes and adherence are reported to the Quality and Safety Committee tri-annually, with some changes and more scrutiny expected within the next report due in June 2025.

The Board accepted the acknowledgements and recommendations presented to them.

Quality and Safety AAA Chairs Report

- Josie Spencer, Chair of the Quality and Safety Committee, presented the report.
- Josie Spencer stated that work is ongoing around the infectious disease response commissioning guidance for ICB's. Josie noted that a gap analysis has been undertaken, but there are some risks outstanding that need to be managed. Josie added that this work will come back to the committee in six months' time to ensure full assurance.
- Josie Spencer advised that the committee has received the final report on the progress being made in relation to All Age Continuing Health Care and the transition from the CSU into the ICB, with positive feedback received regarding this process.
- Josie Spencer informed the Board that the Quality and Safety Committee approved the Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism Host/Home Commissioner Standard Operating Procedure, along with endorsing the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Alcohol Strategy.

The Chair thanked Josie Spencer for the report. The Board accepted and acknowledged the recommendations presented to them.

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Health and Care Senate AAA Chairs Report - March

- Paul Edmondson-Jones, Chief Medical Officer, presented the report.
- Paul Edmondson-Jones highlighted the technical items for noting from the Integrated Medicines Optimisation Group summary, the approval of the gynaecology pathway for

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the system, noting this as an important document as part of the Women's Health strategy, and the All-Age Palliative Care and End of Life strategy.

The Chair thanked Paul Edmondson-Jones for the report. The Board received and noted the recommendations presented to them.

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Health and Care Senate AAA Chairs Report - April

- Paul Edmondson-Jones, Chief Medical Officer, presented the report.
- Paul Edmondson-Jones highlighted the Integrated Medicines Optimisation Group summary, the Ear Wax Removal Policy and Individual Funding Request Policy to note for approval.

The Chair thanked Paul Edmondson-Jones for the report. The Board received and noted the recommendations presented to them.

ICS Finance and Performance Report

- Paul Brown, Chief Finance Officer and Phil Smith, Chief Delivery Officer, presented the report.
- Paul Brown noted the year-end position as successful in getting to the control total of £17.8m variance to plan, which was agreed with the regional team.
- Paul Brown highlighted the work that has been undertaken within Continuing Healthcare as a real success in reducing spend as a result of having less intrusive packages of care, whilst continuing to improve lives for people and patients. Paul credited Heather Johnson and Claire Underwood for this work, and shared thanks to Neil Carr, Chief Executive at Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust, for his support and the support of his team within the system collaborative.
- Phil Smith stated that March saw a continuation of pressures around urgent and emergency care, noting that demand was the highest recorded within one month since pre-pandemic. Phil added that this has somewhat settled since going into the new financial year, and the four-hour target has improved.
- Phil Smith stated that there continues to be significant challenges in terms of ambulance response times and handover times, with UHNM reporting an average handover of 1 hour, 32 minutes in April.
- Phil Smith shared that a learning event was held earlier in the week bringing all partners together with a particular focus on critical incidents and the learning from these. Phil stated that following this, findings will be reported to the Finance and Performance Committee and then to the Board.
- Phil Smith stated that following a previous report around the impact of planned care procedures due to the pressures of urgent and emergency care, the impact is still felt. Phil explained the aim was to eliminate 65 week waits by the end of March, but the year ended with an additional 233. Phil explained that despite this, annually, we saw 10,000 less people on the waiting list across our population.
- Phil Smith was pleased to share that we're currently ahead of plan in terms of the reduction around 52 week waits, and the plan for this year is to clear the 65 week waits by July 2025 and continue productivity through the summer months before heading into the winter period.

The Chair thanked Paul Brown and Phil Smith for the report. The Board received the recommendations presented to them.

Finance and Performance Committee AAA Chairs Report - April

- Josie Spencer, Chair of the Quality and Safety Committee, presented the report.
- Josie Spencer noted the overarching financial and efficiency figures in the plan that are going to be a real challenge alongside workforce reduction.
- Josie Spencer stated that as a committee, full assurance will be ensured in terms of the progress of the plan and early sight of any risks and issues.
- Josie Spencer assured the Board that there will be a clearer understanding of delivery following June's meeting, and associated risks will be discussed in more detail following this.

The Chair thanked Josie Spencer for the report. The Board noted and acknowledged the recommendations presented to them.

Finance and Performance Committee AAA Chairs Report - May

- Josie Spencer, Chair of the Quality and Safety Committee, presented the report.
- Josie Spencer advised that the system and performance group regularly provide a formal assurance report to the committee, which outlines specific areas of concern to ensure a greater focus on these areas.
- Josie Spencer highlighted an escalation regarding mental health and the access/ wait times for autism assessments. Josie assured the Board that SPG are looking into this in more detail and will provide a report to the committee in due course.
- Josie Spencer noted the policies that have been approved by the committee including the mental health assessment payment policy, along with a business case that will be put forward to the West Midlands CAMHS provider collaborative around supporting children and young people with challenging behaviour.

The Chair thanked Josie Spencer for the report. The Board noted and acknowledged the recommendations presented to them.

ICS People Culture and Inclusion Committee Report

- Mish Irvine, Chief People Officer, presented the report.
- Mish Irvine stated that the system reported a position of 1271 over the operational planning figure as per the end of the financial year. Mish advised that this is broken down by 880 more substantive colleagues than we'd expected to see.
- Mish Irvine stated that although the agency figure reported at 1.6 against a target of 3.2%, assurance processes need to be clear, along with articulating CIP programmes, the risk involved in delivering them, the workforce numbers and deployment of workforce that will enable them to be delivered safely.
- Mish Irvine stated that work is ongoing with finance colleagues within provider organisations to understand the reason for variance, and actions are being taken through the People, Culture and Inclusion Committee and the Finance and Performance Committee.

The Chair thanked Mish Irvine for the report. The Board acknowledged the recommendations presented to them.

ICS People Culture and Inclusion Committee AAA Chairs Report

- Shokat Lal, Non-Executive Chair of People, Culture and Organisational Development Committee, presented the report.
- Shokat Lal highlighted the escalation around workforce growth and mitigations.
- Shokat Lal advised that the committee will continue to closely monitor the data around variations and bring more detailed feedback to the Board in due course.

The Chair thanked Shokat Lal for the report. The Board received the recommendations presented to them.

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent ICB Strategic Commissioning and Transformation Committee AAA Chairs Report

- Julie Houlder, Non-Executive Chair of the Audit Committee, presented the report.
- Julie Houlder advised that a positive discussion around NHS reset had taken place in their latest meeting, which was led by Elizabeth Disney.
- Julie Houlder stated that the role of this committee is increasingly important as further guidance is received around strategic commissioning for outcomes.
- Julie Houlder advised the committee will continue to be mindful about the interface between the Strategic Commissioning Transformation Committee and the Transition Committee.

The Chair thanked Julie Houlder for the report. The Board received and noted the recommendations presented to them.

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent ICB Audit Committee AAA Chairs Report

- Julie Houlder, Non-Executive Chair of the Audit Committee, presented the report.
- Julie Houlder advised that the committee met to approve the submission of the draft annual report and accounts.
- Julie Houlder noted that the committee received a positive outcome of the audit undertaken by Grant Thornton on the 2023/2024 Mental Health Investment Standard.
- Julie Houlder added that the committee agreed on the 2025/2026 internal audit plan, noting this will need to be reviewed in line with the assurance of processes to support the delivery of the plan.
- Julie Houlder advised that there is nothing to alert the Board to regarding the annual report and accounts, which is going out to audit.
- Julie Houlder shared thanks to all involved in the production of report, noting it was produced in tight timescales.

The Chair thanked Julie Houlder for the report. The Board received and noted the recommendations presented to them.

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent ICB Remuneration Committee AAA Chairs Report

- Shokat Lal, Non-Executive Chair of People, Culture and Organisational Development Committee, presented the report.
- Shokat Lal noted the ratification of the appointment of the Chief Finance Officer for an interim period.

The Chair thanked Shokat Lal for the report. The Board received and noted the recommendations presented to them.

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Date and time of next meeting in public: 17 July 2025 at 1pm held in public, in person at the Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust Headquarters Boardroom, Mellor House, St George's Hospital, Corporation Street, Stafford, ST16 3SR.