

**Questions submitted prior to the Board in Common Meeting held on the 26<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

	BY WHOM	QUESTION	RESPONSE
Q1	Ian Syme	<p>1.Looked After Children Initial/Review Health Assessment Compliance.</p> <p>Looked After Children are a particularly extremely vulnerable group.</p> <p>The ICB have a very specific duty to ensure that Looked After Children have an Initial Health Assessment and a Reviewed Health assessment within very specific designated time frames.</p> <p>The inability to comply with those duties has been a standing item on SSOT ICB Board reporting for way over a year now.</p> <p>On January 16th, 2025, contained within ‘enclosure 15: SBAF Update’ of SSOT ICB Board papers was the paragraph as per screen grab I’ve attached to this question.</p> <p>In fact, quote. ‘Additional resources have been allocated and a recovery plan agreed with Q3 data predicting recovery by end of the financial year 2024/25.’ That ‘recovery’ if it came to exist was extremely ‘short lived.’</p> <p>Contained within this months ICB Cluster Board Papers for 26th March 2026 minutes of the SSOT ICB Quality and Safety Committee (meeting held 18/2/26) the situation regarding Looked After Children’s Initial/Review Health Assessment Compliance is quote “ ...not showing ANY consistent improvement or clear direction of a reduction in trajectory.”</p> <p>When will there be FULL sustainable compliance so that a very vulnerable cohort namely Looked After Children receive their</p>	<p><b>Response provided by Heather Johnstone</b></p> <p>Unfortunately, we are not currently able to provide a definitive date by which full and sustained improvement will be met. This is due to a number of factors including the work required to redesign the service to ensure compliance. However, we can assure you that the ICB and MPFT are working collaboratively to address performance in review health assessments which has been impacted by increased demand.</p> <p>Throughout 2025/26, progress has been made, leading to a reduction in the length of time assessments remain overdue. Additional funding, along with an updated service specification and strengthened reporting arrangements are expected to be agreed this month.</p> <p>Work is now underway to finalise the detail and the timelines for the service redesign and for meeting statutory requirements. This work will enable us to provide more detail and date expectations by which full and sustained improvement will be met. The ICB will continue to closely monitor the progress of service redesign and performance. For assurance we can advise you that we continue to closely monitor our looked after children and are prioritising assessments based on factors such as stage of care journey and clinical need to ensure that there are no delays in care proceedings or access to health services.</p>

		Initial/Review Health Assessments as required within stipulated time frames because at present it's brutally obvious that this 'service' is way too often sub optimal?	
Q2	Ian Syme	<p>Integrated Performance Report</p> <p>Ambulance Handover Delays UHNM particularly Royal Stoke ED portal:</p> <p>At January 29th, 2026, ICB Cluster Board meeting I put a question to that meeting regarding 'Release to Respond' Ambulance Handover initiative being implemented at UHNMs Royal Stoke ED portal.</p> <p>In response to my question the cluster informed that as of January 26th, 2026, a maximum of 60 minutes phased down to a maximum of 45 minutes from w/c 2nd February 2026 was the trajectory to ensure delays in Ambulance Handover at Royal Stoke ED are within the UEC 2025/26 plan of 45 minutes Maximum.</p> <p>The intention was to attain and sustain a 45 minutes maximum from early February 2026 ahead of the March 2026 deadline.</p> <p>Today's (26/3/26) ICB Cluster Board Paper "Integrated Performance Report Ambulance: UEC metrics off plan Action 2 of 2:"</p> <p>Average (not maximum) UHNM handover times February 2026 being 1h 15m 31secs i.e. 20m 31secs off plan.</p> <p>I am now aware that WMAS Ambulance lost hours at Royal Stoke ED for February 2026 whilst still substantial are the lowest since August 2025.</p> <p>The ICB SBAF RAG risk re Ambulance Handover Delays is Red 25 i.e. the highest risk rating attainable.</p> <p>a. Is the ICB still sighted on the achieving of a maximum 45 minutes Ambulance Handover at UHNM ED portal specifically</p>	<p><b>Response provided by Hayley Allison</b></p> <p>a.</p> <p>Is the ICB still sighted on the achieving of a maximum 45-minute Ambulance Handover at UHNM ED portal specifically Royal Stoke ED portal ahead of the March 2026 deadline as per the response to my question 29/1/26?</p> <p>Yes – The system is still actively continuing to work towards achieving the 45-minute ambulance handover standard, including at Royal Stoke Hospital.</p> <p>The system continues to recognise the challenging position in relation to Ambulance Handover delays and are actively working together to support improvement including through demand management, ensuring patients receive care in a timely way in the most appropriate setting. We acknowledge that Ambulance Handover times are not where we would want them to be as a system, however - we have seen continuous improvement on our position during our most challenged winter months, between October 2025 to February 2026, during what is predicted to be some of our most challenging periods.</p> <p>b.</p> <p>If the 45 minutes maximum is NOT achieved by the March 2026 deadline when is that standard now projected to be achieved considering that all Acute Trusts have now been required to dramatically reduce Corridor Care whilst still improving Ambulance Handover Times at EDs as per a March 4th 2026 letter PRN02378 from NHSE UEC Director titled 'Additional Actions to virtually eliminate Corridor Care'?</p> <p>For the most recent Operational Planning process and our medium-term plan, our system providers lead the submissions for metrics such as ambulance handover delays. Performance is planned against a variance of factors that impact each metric. A trajectory for significant reduction and improvement in ambulance</p>

	<p>Royal Stoke ED portal ahead of the March 2026 deadline as per the response to my question 29/1/26?</p> <p>b. If the 45 minutes maximum is NOT achieved by the March 2026 deadline when is that standard now projected to be achieved considering that all Acute Trusts have now been required to dramatically reduce Corridor Care whilst still improving Ambulance Handover Times at EDs as per a March 4th 2026 letter PRN02378 from NHSE UEC Director titled 'Additional Actions to virtually eliminate Corridor Care'?</p>	<p>handovers above 45 minutes by the month of March 2027 for UHNM has been developed.</p>
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