

# Integrated Care Board Briefing

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent  
ICB Meeting

18 January 2024

## 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](#).

### Community story

- Dr Bala Sankarasubbu, a GP from Stoke-on-Trent, presented the work she is doing to support women's health. Bala's presentation can be found on [our website](#).

The Board thanked Dr Sankarasubbu for her presentation. The Board commented that it shows what can be achieved at a local level, especially when community assets are involved, for example libraries, as many people would feel more comfortable going for an informal conversation in a library, rather than going into a medicalised environment. The Board asked Bala how she gained people's trust when they were initially wary of attending appointments. Bala shared that it has not been an easy ride and that the informal sessions have made the team seem more approachable. Bala and her team also approached community leaders to help dispel myths around women's health and they have provided health information leaflets in different languages. The combined effort of these actions has increased the uptake of women's health appointments. The Board asked if Bala's initiatives were going to be rolled out to other GPs; Bala said they hoped this would happen soon.

### ICB Chair and Executive update

- David Pearson, Chair, introduced this report. David congratulated those that had received honours in the King's New Year's Honours list.
- David shared his appreciation for Tracy Bullock, Chief Executive Officer, University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust, for who is retiring later this year, and David Rogers, who is stepping down from his role as Chair for North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust.
- Peter Axon, Chief Executive Officer, shared that planning is underway for the next financial year. Peter drew attention to the fact that next year will be challenging given the financial climate and the legacy of COVID-19.

The Board thanked Peter and David for the report. The Board asked if the key population figures could be compared to the figures from last year, to demonstrate the improvements. Peter confirmed in the next report that December 2022's figures will be compared to December 2023's figures. The Board asked how an increase in training provision, as outlined in the report, fits with the Integrated Care Board's financial position. Peter has asked that colleagues are working on a 3–5-year plan that combines workforce, finance and operations, so we have a longer-term plan of how this can be delivered sustainably.

### PricewaterhouseCooper's (PwC) Report on Financial Recovery Plan and Grip and Control

- Paul Brown, Chief Finance Officer, presented this report. The Integrated Care System was required by NHS England to commission an independent assessment from PwC to comment on the robustness of the Financial Recovery Plan (FRP) and underpinning Cost Improvement Plans. The system recovery plan is having a significant impact and the predicted deficit has decreased to £91million.
- The report recognises there is a strong collaborative approach across the system in support of the recovery plan. PwC confirmed good governance is being used across the system and that there was a level of grip and control around the hiring of people and use of agency staff.
- The areas of improvement highlighted in the report are:

## NHS Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board

- greater detail is needed around the metrics.
- there needs to be faster implementation of Continuing Healthcare improvement measures.
- there should be more of a benefits realisation process adopted when business cases are submitted.
- there needs to be a standardisation of control of good practices across the system.
- more detail is needed around the workforce metrics.
- Paul shared that there will be quarterly review meetings to review progress on the areas needing improvement.

The Board thanked Paul for the report. The Board asked whether Audit Committee could support in the review of agency spend. Mish Irvine, Interim Chief People Officer, confirmed there is a robust system in place to review agency use, but welcomed the support of the Audit Committee. The Board commented that there should be more rigour around benefits realised and a systematic process to realise this.

### Quality and Safety Report

- Becky Scullion, Director of Nursing – Quality Assurance and Improvement, presented the report.
- Becky shared that as part of the Deteriorating Patient Network, a review of the 'Care Home Resource Pack' is being progressed, supported by the ICB's Nursing and Therapies Team. It has been proven to be impactful in support of Nursing Homes.
- Becky shared that pressures in the heart failure service within the community remain. The service is prioritising urgent referrals, but this is having an adverse effect on routine waiting times. However, a Consultant Cardiologist has commenced secondment and is supporting the recovery process.
- Becky shared that Healthwatch have been undertaking some 'deep dives' into primary care. The findings of which will be shared across the system to improve patient experiences.
- Becky drew attention to the point that a substantial number of residents in South Staffordshire access healthcare at providers outside of Staffordshire. The ICB's Quality Leads have long established working relationships with other local ICB's and work in partnership with them to collaboratively support quality improvements for our residents.

The Board thanked Becky for the report. The Board asked if care homes were being supported to understand the 'Care Home Resource Pack'. Becky confirmed that services are going into care homes and provided in person support within care homes. The Board asked what communications are being given to patients regarding the pressures in the heart failure service. Becky confirmed conversations are happening directly with patients on the waiting list. There is evidence that patients are aware there is a wait and that is being reviewed. The Board asked how people with digital poverty were considered with the introduction of the digital care plan app. Becky confirmed that the app was being offered as an additional way to access care plans, alongside existing ways.

### Finance and Performance Report

- Paul Brown, Chief Financial Officer, and Phil Smith, Chief Delivery Officer, introduced the report. Paul confirmed it has been agreed that a deficit of £91million has been accepted. The ICB will hold this deficit, rather than it be shared across the system by providers, for example.
- Phil confirmed it was a very challenging Christmas and New Year period with further pressure linked to the Industrial Actions. System capacity and escalation processes have been deployed. Other updates included:

## NHS Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board

- In terms of the comparative metrics with last year, there were 700 more ambulance conveyances to Royal Stoke University Hospital than last year.
- COVID-19 levels remained high and statically high.
- Before Christmas there was 85% bed occupancy so there was bed capacity going into Christmas.
- Medically Fit for Discharge levels have remained better than expected, which is credit to the system managing the flow.
- Ambulance category 2 response time is 30 minutes. During Christmas and New Year, we averaged 50 minutes, which is an improvement on three hours which was the figure from the same period last year.
- Acute Care at Home service has been fragile over the past few weeks, so the system has deployed resources into that service to avoid hospital admissions.
- Elective delivery has been impacted recently due to the increase of outlying places into surgical spaces, and the recent Industrial Action.
- As part of the planning work for 2024/25, there will be a review of the impact on our geography in relation to ambulance resources.
- Megan Nurse, Non-Executive Director, raised that there is continued pressure on Psychiatric Intensive Care Beds within the system and a local PICU options appraisal is being developed to address this. Autism assessment waits for Children and Young People increased by one week at Midland Partnership University Foundation Trust and two weeks at North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare Trust.
- Megan shared that in relation to the system recovery plan, the Admission Avoidance and Care Homes priorities remain the most challenged areas, with a majority of red rated key deliverables.
- Megan shared that the Committee agreed with the need for additional investment (£1.1m full year costs in each case) in the Neonatal and Obstetrics Business Cases, but given no sources of funding were identified, the Committee requested that the System Chief Executive Group consider the options.
- Megan shared that the Committee noted although the in-year financial position for Delegated General Practice is on track, the underlying position is a significant deficit.

The Board thanked Paul, Phil and Megan for their reports.

### 2024/25 Planning

- Paul Brown, Chief Financial Officer, and Chris Bird, Chief Transformation Officer presented this report.
- Paul confirmed that it is likely the system will have less money next year, than this year, due to inflation increasing faster than NHS resources. In terms of 2024/25 planning, the financial framework within which we will be operating is being finalised. A meeting is planned for 24 January 2024 with the objective of this session being to pave the way for our clinical leaders to help us work through our priorities and options.
- Chris confirmed that the Joint Forward Plan will be refreshed following national guidance.

The Board thanked Paul and Chris for the report. The Board asked if the Operational Plan and the Joint Forward Plan are linked into the work of the portfolios. Paul confirmed that a matrix of organisations and portfolios will be created, and the portfolios will have clear objectives and targets.

## Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) Policy

- Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) need to have routes for speaking up by 30 January 2024. The ICB has already had this in place for some time and have produced the policy in line with the guidance provided by the National Guardian's Office (NGO). The ICB should also consider providing speak up routes for all staff in primary care. Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent ICB have two FTSU Guardians and it has been agreed that one of the ICB's guardians will provide a route for speaking up to support general practice. The policy that was approved in July 2023 has been updated to reflect this change and notes the inclusion for general practice.

The Board ratified the policy.

## Committee Assurance Reports

**Audit Committee:** Julie Holder, Non-Executive Director shared that two Internal Audit reports were referred to Finance and Performance Committee, but the Board is asked to note the additional burden this will place on an extremely busy committee. This issue will be discussed as part of the Development session on today's agenda on the outcome of the Governance Review.

**People, Culture and Inclusion Committee:** Shokat Lal, Non-Executive Director shared that lengthy discussions around the financial framework and the impact this will have on workforce. Planning is underway to discuss this topic further with the board during a 'deep dive' session.

The Board received the reports and thanked Julie and Shokat for their updates.

**Date and time of next meeting in public:** 15 February 2024 at 1.00pm held in Public – via Microsoft Teams