

# Questions and Answers

## Health and Wellbeing Board

Thursday, 7 December 2023

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## Public Questions as specified in the Council's Procedure Rules of the Constitution

Item (A)	Health and Wellbeing Board Meeting on 7 December 2023
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**(A) Question submitted to the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust from Mark Knight:**

*“Could the Health and Wellbeing Board demand that the hospital trust takes no action to determine the site of a replacement RBH Building without first determining how their services should be fairly and properly delivered particularly in Newbury - taking account of patients and their practical support needs?”*

**The Chief Medical Officer for the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust answered:**

The redevelopment of the Royal Berkshire NHS Hospital is of critical importance to providing high quality healthcare services to all the communities of Berkshire.

Over the last few months, we have been actively engaging with the New Hospital Programme to secure the support we need to be able to progress and to understand the implications of the centralised approach to design and procurement of new hospitals that the Department of Health and Social Care has begun to release. This has naturally led to a period where our external activities have appeared quieter.

Having made some positive progress in this area, we anticipate that 2024 will see us engaging more with our population and stakeholders over the future location and service offering of the redeveloped hospital. This will naturally see us undertake detailed quantitative and qualitative analysis of how different groups will be affected by the new hospital. We will invite people to participate in this and will be keen to discuss the output of it with partners, including the Board.

Our clinical services strategy (CSS) underpins all of our work on the new hospital. At the heart of the CSS is a commitment to continue to expand the range of ambulatory, diagnostic and outpatient services we offer from West Berkshire Community Hospital, Bracknell Healthspace and Townlands Memorial Hospital, and to invest in the delivery of services in patients' homes and local communities through our digital programme and collaboration with primary care networks.

Since 2017, this approach to deliver more care in the community, has led to an expansion of our services at West Berkshire Community Hospital and a number of important developments including the new renal unit, the new cancer centre, and investments in diagnostic equipment, which have expanded the range of tests we can provide for the West Berkshire population without them having to travel into Reading. We anticipate this continuing over the coming years, supported by Trust and government investment and the generous donations from many local charities.

There will always be a range of services that it is not appropriate for us to provide from a community hospital, requiring patients and their carers to have to travel to Reading. We recognise that accessing our site can be a challenge and will be considering this in the work we will do to appraise options for the new hospital. In the past year, we've made several changes to improve patient parking on site, and we now offer a park and ride service from Mere oak and Thames Valley Park direct to the hospital for those patients, families and staff for whom this is appropriate. Details of this service are available on our [website](#).

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# Public Questions as specified in the Council's Procedure Rules of the Constitution

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Item (B)

Health and Wellbeing Board Meeting on 7 December 2023

**(B) Question submitted to the Executive Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health Integration from Ms Paula Saunderson:**

*“How are we doing on the Health & Wellbeing Strategy Delivery Plan Action 2.1 please, especially in relation to specific help for Unpaid Dementia Carers in West Berks?”*

**The Executive Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health Integration answered:**

There is some positive progress to report in this area, but there remains much more to do.

We have Dementia Friendly West Berkshire, a commissioned service funded by Public Health and Wellbeing. They work with partners and communities to set up Memory Cafes, which will become locally embedded with the community.

One new cafe is now running with support, and plans are in place to begin work to develop a second cafe in a new area.

The Big Dementia Conversation is scheduled for 20<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> February at Shaw House and all adult social care staff are encouraged to attend on one of the two days. The same session is being run twice to enable staff to attend on different days to support business delivery. The session will include lived experience from carers and awareness raising of the role of unpaid carers in our community. It will also provide signposting information to all the community activities that are dementia-friendly and support people living with dementia and their unpaid carers.

Membership of Dementia Friendly West Berkshire has increased to 60 members.

**Paula Saunderson asked the following supplementary question:**

*“That’s good news about the progress. I understand that Sue Butterworth is looking at putting some form of community hubs and cafes in some of the rural villages, which would be something that dementia carers could come into. I would hope that you would support that approach, because when I was stuck in Boxford for three years as a dementia carer, there wasn’t much help for me out there. Continue the good work. I have a couple of suggestions, so I will write into you Chairman.”*

**The Executive Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health Integration answered:**

Thank you.

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# Public Questions as specified in the Council's Procedure Rules of the Constitution

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Item (C)

Health and Wellbeing Board Meeting on 7 December 2023

**(C) Question submitted to the Integrated Care Board Executive Director for Berkshire West Place by Paula Saunderson:**

*“Under Action 2.2 – how much progress is being made with these Actions in relation to the Dementia Pathway in later stages of regression, especially with introduction of dedicated Admiral Nurses into each PCN?”*

**The Deputy Place Director (Berkshire West) answered:**

Having reviewed the actions listed in the Delivery Plan included under Objective 2.2, it appears that the bulk of these are currently focused on young carers, although we have also identified a number of actions, which are not currently proceeding around support for carers of people with dementia. We will therefore revisit these actions through the newly re-established Berkshire West Mental Health Programme Board to ensure that the programme has a stronger focus on the Dementia Pathway.

With regards to Admiral Nurses, this is not a role that most PCNs currently have, but we will pick up a discussion with the lead PCN GP for workforce to consider if there is merit in exploring this further.

**Paula Saunderson asked the following supplementary question:**

*“I think as I go through this journey, which is now six years long, there is a need for more targeted support for people who are involved with / looking after people in the later stages [of dementia], because a lot of the dementia stuff is about activities, and when you get bed-bound people who are doubly incontinent and can't feed themselves, you are not going to be able to take them or yourself to many activities. So having something like an Admiral Nurse, or some kind of bespoke facility where we can phone up with the difficult questions about what to do, would be of benefit to a lot of people across the whole of Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West network.*

*Also, I receive dementia newsletters from Oxfordshire, so maybe that's something you could look at a BOB level to have newsletters for dementia carers across the piece.”*

**The Deputy Place Director (Berkshire West) answered:**

Thank you for those further points. I will make sure that the point about later stages of dementia and the question of newsletters are considered in the discussion I mentioned within the Mental Health Programme Board.

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# Public Questions as specified in the Council's Procedure Rules of the Constitution

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Item (D)

Health and Wellbeing Board Meeting on 7 December 2023

**(D) Question submitted to the Integrated Care Board Executive Director for Berkshire West Place from Mark Knight:**

*“Before the proposed response (10 D appendix D) is sent to NHS England could you review the comments suggesting that the Local Pharmacy Committee consider the existing provision is adequate because the observable lengthy queues and dispensing errors local residents encounter, this is manifestly not the case.”*

**The Deputy Place Director (Berkshire West) answered:**

The assessment of whether a pharmacy / pharmacies are able to absorb additional demand caused by the closure of another service is complex, and includes input from the ICB, our local Public Health teams (regarding things such as travel times, opening hours, and services provided) and also from Community Pharmacy Thames Valley, which is the organisation that represents our local pharmacists.

We are aware that at times our residents face longer than ideal waits to collect prescriptions; this can be due to a range of reasons, and we will be working with pharmacies to ensure that their services are easily accessible to those who need them, including at times of high demand.

If dispensing errors have occurred, then we would expect these to be reported and investigated in line with due process.

Overall, our assessment has concluded that the existing provision is not inadequate, and a further update on pharmacy provision across Berkshire West, focussing on the resilience of that provision, will be discussed at the Health and Wellbeing Board meeting in February.

**Mark Knight asked the following supplementary question:**

*“I must admit I am worried about dispensing errors, particularly with batch medication – there seems to be nowhere we can go to report across the piece errors. It is either with a doctor or a chemist; each of them will tell you a different story and actually the process needs to be looked at. No-one is quite sure of where you can do that.”*

**The Deputy Place Director (Berkshire West) answered:**

There are processes in place for those errors to be investigated and any appropriate action taken, but if patients have concerns, I would suggest they are reported to our [Patient Advice and Liaison \(PALS\) service](#) who will be able to liaise with the pharmacies involved as appropriate.

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# Public Questions as specified in the Council's Procedure Rules of the Constitution

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Item (E)

Health and Wellbeing Board Meeting on 7 December 2023

**(E) Question submitted to the West Berkshire Council Executive Director – Adult Social Care from Paula Saunderson:**

*“The Paperwork for the Better Care Fund does not describe what it actually consists of and what it delivers and how much West Berks Council receives from it and for which Services, so please can you outline these details in general?”*

**The Executive Director – Adult Social Care answered:**

You have asked to outline the details in general, but if I haven't gone into as much detail as you would like, then you have my email address, so we can follow up.

Here are the general details. The total of Better Care Fund (BCF) income for 2023/24 is £15.9M and for 2024/25 it is £16.3M

The fund is used in a variety of ways to fund activities either by health services, or by the Local authority or by a combination of both. The intention of the fund is to make health and local authorities work more successfully together, so I haven't tried to unpick which is for the local authority and which is for health because a lot of this is done jointly, and all the planning is agreed jointly as well.

There are large amounts of money spent in certain areas and small amounts spent on discrete areas, but I will give you a flavour of how the money is used:

- Approximately £7M is used for the delivery of direct care services, for example, care home placements, and care at home, and that sort of thing.
- About £2M is used to adapt people's homes through the Disabled Facilities Grant, which is an important way of helping people to manage at home as per their entitlements.
- Approximately £1.6M is spent on reablement / rehabilitation services, trying to help people to manage their lives more successfully.
- We have about £1.3M for a variety of preventative schemes. From a personal perspective, I think this is really critical, and what we do quite well in West Berkshire is finding a balance between early interventions to prevent needs increasing, helping people in crisis to stay out of hospital where possible, and helping people to get out of hospitals, where they are in acute settings.
- We have approximately £800K committed to services specifically for carers themselves.

There are then small pots of money, for example, data sharing and programme management, and specific functions such as a mental health link worker.

So hopefully that gives you a flavour, but I would be more than happy to go into more detail if that would be helpful to you personally.

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**Paula Saunderson asked the following supplementary question:**

*“Respite care for carers – is that in this budget or is that in another budget? I just worry that there isn't enough ability in the stages that I'm talking about. If you're trying to have a holiday or a break, that person needs to be placed somewhere, whilst you have that break. From my interactions with other carers, I feel that we're not quite getting to the mark on that one.”*

**The Executive Director – Adult Social Care answered:**

I can look at the detail and come back to you offline if that's OK.

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# Public Questions as specified in the Council's Procedure Rules of the Constitution

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Item (F)	Health and Wellbeing Board Meeting on 7 December 2023
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**(F) Question submitted to the Interim Service Director – Communities and Wellbeing from Paula Saunderson:**

*“The Ageing Well Task Group mentions an Older Persons Day Event delivered with Dementia Friendly West Berkshire (DFWB), and I am signed up to the DFWB Newsletters but do not recall one coming to advise me of this event, so how well was it advertised and where did it take place please?”*

**The Interim Service Director – Communities and Wellbeing answered:**

The Older Persons Day Event was a partnership piece of work between West Berkshire Council, Age UK Berkshire, and Dementia Friendly West Berkshire. The event took place at St Nicolas Church Hall in Newbury on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023. All three partners undertook communication about the event.

Dementia Friendly West Berkshire included the event on their monthly calendar, which is shared with clients, members and other partners and is publicly available on the Dementia Friendly West Berkshire website.

West Berkshire Council included information in the Residents Bulletin of 27<sup>th</sup> September 2023. In addition, we ran social media posts to promote the event. Flyers were also shared with Dementia Friendly West Berkshire and Ageing Well Task Group partners, Social Prescribers in the Primary Care Networks, and Adult Social Care teams for onward promotion.

Age UK Berkshire also undertook their own additional communications and social media promotion.

**Paula Saunderson asked the following supplementary question:**

*“During that period, we stopped receiving the newsletters that Vicki used to send to us, so that has removed the pro-activity from your side to us, so we would have to be reliant on going onto the website at the Dementia Friendly West Berkshire (DFWB) website ourselves.*

*Can I make a request that that facility is reinstated now that you're in post? We've got the facility to sign up for newsletters of various sorts coming out of West Berkshire Council – to have that for DFWB as well means that the proactivity is there from you to us, rather than very busy carers having to try to remember to go and look at things.”*

**The Interim Service Director – Communities and Wellbeing answered:**

Thank you for that additional question. Sue Butterworth is the Chair of our Ageing Well Task Group. I'll take that back to her and try to find out a little be more about what's happened and try to rectify that for you.

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