

# HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 7 DECEMBER 2023

**Present:** Councillor Alan Macro (Executive Portfolio Holder: Adult Social Care and Health Integration), Councillor Heather Codling (Executive Portfolio Holder: Children, Education and Young People's Services), Councillor Vicky Poole (substitute for Councillor Lee Dillon), Councillor Joanne Stewart (Shadow Portfolio: Adult Social Care; Integrated Health; Public Health), Paul Coe (Executive Director - Adult Social Care), AnnMarie Dodds (Executive Director - Children and Family Services), Jessica Jhundoo Evans (Arts and Leisure Representative), April Peberdy (Acting Service Director - Communities and Wellbeing) and Dr Heike Veldtman (Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board)

**Attending Remotely:** Councillor Janine Lewis (Executive Portfolio Holder: Public Health, Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside), Councillor David Marsh (Minority Group Spokesperson on Health and Wellbeing), Matthew Hensby (Sovereign Housing), Supt Helen Kenny (Thames Valley Police), Dr Janet Lippett (Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust), Gail Muirhead (Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service), Sean Murphy (Service Lead – Public Protection), Garry Poulson (Voluntary Sector Representative), and Fiona Worby (Healthwatch West Berkshire)

**Also Present:** Gail Muirhead (Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service), Dave Wraight (Acting Head of Children and Family Services), Gordon Oliver (Principal Policy Officer) and David Cook (Principal Democratic Services Officer)

**Apologies for inability to attend the meeting:** Sarah Webster, Councillor Lee Dillon, Prof John Ashton

**Absent:** Helen Williamson

### PART I

#### 38 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2023 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### 39 Actions arising from previous meeting(s)

Progress on actions from the previous meetings was noted.

#### 40 Declarations of Interest

In addition to the standing declarations of interest as stated in the agenda, Councillor Jo Stewart declared a standing interest by virtue of the fact that her husband worked for the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust as Head of Contracts Management. Unless there were agenda items that related to the commissioning of services, she reported that her interest was a personal or an other registrable interest, but not a disclosable pecuniary interest.

Dr Heike Veldtman declared an interest in Agenda Item 10 by virtue of the fact that she was a GP at a local practice.

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### 41 Public Questions

A full transcription of the public and Member question and answer sessions is available from the following link: [Transcription of Q&As](#).

### 42 Petitions

There were no petitions presented to the Board.

### 43 Membership of the Health and Wellbeing Board

It was noted that membership of the Health and Wellbeing Board was on an organisational basis. A standing item was retained on the agenda to note any changes in personnel. There had been no changes to membership since the last meeting.

### 44 Place Based Partnership Update

Helen Clark (ICB Deputy Place Director (Berkshire West)) provided the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Update Briefing (Agenda Item 8).

**RESOLVED** to note the report.

### 45 Local Response to the Cost of Living Crisis

Sean Murphy (Service Lead – Public Protection) presented the report on the Local Response to the Cost of Living Crisis (Agenda Item 9).

Further updates were provided on activities that had taken place since the report had been published.

The Board noted that an [Individual Executive Decision](#) would be taken on 14 December in relation to proposed amendments to the Household Support Fund, including:

- Distributing money for urgent needs (food / energy) through local voluntary sector organisations.
- Allocating a further £19.5K to the essential household good scheme (furniture / white goods).
- Allocating £10K to support for people in emergency accommodation (food / hot food).
- Setting up a Discretionary Assistance Fund for people moving into properties where carpets / curtains needed to be provided / replaced.
- Making grant payments to people who only received Housing Benefit and were not on Universal Credit.
- Targeted support for older people over the winter months (hot meals / energy / boiler repairs).
- Support for young carers / those leaving care .

A funders meeting had taken place at Greenham. There were presentations from West Berkshire Food Bank, Newbury Soup Kitchen, the Community Resource Centre. A discussion had also taken place about how funders and providers could work together.

A meeting had been held with voluntary sector partners on 1 December at Shaw House. Around 35 charities attended that provided cost of living support. Proposals on apportioning funding were well received. The meeting was also attended by several district councillors, including the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing.

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The Council had contributed to a joint fund with Greenham Trust. A recent Individual Executive Decision had increased the contribution to £70K. Greenham Trust had since matched that contribution, so £140K was available to support people with cost of living challenges. This was previously for new projects only, but consideration was being given to supporting increased demand for existing initiatives over the winter period.

Although there had been a general reduction in inflationary pressures, food and fuel were still expensive and energy prices would rise again in January. Many people were still having difficulties, so a package of measures had been put together to support people through the winter months.

It was not known whether there would be another round of the Household Support Fund in 2024.

At the voluntary sector meeting, it had been acknowledged that those most affected by the cost of living rises were experiencing poverty. Therefore, the group had decided to change its name to the Poverty and Cost of Living Forum. This change in emphasis was supported by the Board and it was suggested that future reports should reflect this.

It was highlighted that the Corn Exchange had a 'panto pay it forward' scheme, which offered free tickets for those who otherwise could not afford to attend. The Corn Exchange was also seeking to start a free supper club in the New Year.

### **Actions:**

- **Jessica Jhundoo Evans to share details of the supper club when available.**
- **Sean Murphy and Garry Poulson to promote the above schemes to service users and voluntary sector partners.**

It was suggested that information on local initiatives may not be easy for members of the public to find and that there should be a central repository to which people could be signposted. Officers explained that the Council was a key point of contact, and a number of staff were trained across the organisation to make referrals, with further training / briefings planned. Also, a comms campaign was planned to highlight the support that was available, including the Household Support Fund.

It was also suggested that more could be done to highlight where people could donate items such as furniture and curtains.

**Action: Sean Murphy to discuss promotion of where people could donate items with voluntary sector partners.**

The impacts of poverty on mental and physical health were highlighted, and it was suggested that this could be covered as part of the Health and Wellbeing Board Conference.

There was discussion about how some small, local charities may experience challenges in identifying where the needs were greatest, and it was asked whether there was scope to improve signposting. It was noted that the Volunteer Centre had a central database for such organisations. Also, an event had been held recently to bring together some of the smaller charitable trusts and put them in touch with social workers.

**Action: Councillor Alan Macro to provide details of local charitable trusts in Tilehurst and Theale to Garry Poulson.**

It was noted that one of the work streams for the Mental Health Action Group was around the impacts of poverty on mental health and how people could be supported. However, the Group had struggled to get engagement from partners, and some support services

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were over-subscribed. It was suggested that Adrian Barker and Rachel Johnson could lead discussions at the conference.

A suggestion was made that free physical activity programmes could be better promoted. These had a positive impact on physical and mental health.

The Volunteer Centre had undertaken a series of consultations around mental health pathways on behalf of Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust and a report was being prepared. This had been supported by Adrian Barker.

It was suggested that while organisations represented on the Board had a good idea of the issues facing local residents, there was a need for this information to be mapped and brought into one place. This would allow for better signposting and targeting of resources and would help to avoid duplication.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The report be noted.
- (b) The Service Lead for Public Protection report on additional progress to the Board at its meeting on 22 February 2024.

### 46 Changes to Pharmaceutical Services

April Peberdy presented the report on Changes to Pharmaceutical Services (Agenda Item 10).

The unforeseen benefits application for a new pharmacy in Newbury Town Centre had been discussed by Newbury Town Council. The assertion that there was no gap in provision was challenged – while the south of the town was well served by pharmacies, coverage in other parts was thin and some wards had no pharmacies (e.g., Newbury Clay Hill). It was noted that pharmacies were supposed to have a key role in supporting GPs, but patients would be put off by long queues. There was strong support for the new application.

The Board noted that Newbury had lost Lloyds Pharmacies in Sainsbury's and Bartholomew Street as well as Superdrug in Northbrook Street. While a gap may not be present in statutory terms, there was felt to be a gap in practice, with long queues in Boots highlighted.

It was suggested that West Berkshire Council should do everything it could to support the application (e.g., planning permission).

Healthwatch reported a significant number of patient complaints about pharmacies - an additional pharmacy would help to address some of the issues that had been raised.

It was highlighted that there were plans to push even more services onto pharmacies from 2024, but they were struggling to deliver the existing range of services and to make time to have detailed conversations with patients. An additional pharmacy would help to improve capacity.

It was noted that the sites being considered for the new pharmacy would be close to town centre car parks, which would help to improve access.

The Board noted that there had been 21 pharmacies in West Berkshire when the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) had been undertaken. Since then, five pharmacies had closed and others had reduced their hours, which together had a cumulative impact. The assertion that there was no gap in provision was challenged. It was suggested that the Board should think strategically and consider future needs, taking account of new homes being built in the area.

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It was highlighted that access to services was a key part of the ICB's Primary Care Strategy. Community pharmacies had a key role to play in supporting GPs in relation to seven minor ailments, and improving access to GP appointments was reliant upon this additional support.

It was suggested that factors other than distance / travel time needed to be taken into account when determining whether gaps in provision had occurred, including the services that they were expected to provide.

The Board was advised that the Boots pharmacy in Thatcham regularly had long queues that extended out of the door. There were just two other pharmacies in Thatcham, neither of which were in the town centre. It was also suggested that residents from Newbury Clay Hill ward tended to go to Thatcham for prescriptions. Concerns were expressed about the impacts of the closure on the remaining pharmacies, and it was suggested that a gap would be created in Thatcham as a result of the closure.

Concerns were raised about closures pushing people towards online pharmacies, which would take business away from local pharmacies. Also, long queues would discourage people from buying cosmetics and toiletries in pharmacies. These factors could affect the financial viability of local pharmacies.

Officers advised that assessments had been undertaken with regard to criteria set out in legislation and government guidance. Based on these criteria, no gaps in provision had been judged to have occurred as a result of the changes.

The point was made that there was a five year strategic plan for the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West system. The Board was encouraged to think strategically about population need and how they could be best served to live and thrive. It was noted that 300 Boots pharmacies were scheduled to close by April 2024. The Board was asked what would happen if one of the Boots pharmacies in Newbury was to close.

It was noted that the Local Pharmaceutical Committee had been consulted about dispensing volumes and adequacy of provision, which had informed the decision around whether or to declare a gap in pharmaceutical services.

It was suggested that the report's recommendations could be aligned with the emerging Primary Care Strategy and the model of community pharmacy that this was likely to outline. Furthermore, it was suggested that in addition to the statutory position through the PNA, the Board should also consider whether there was the capacity and resilience within the pharmacy network to take forward that model.

The Board was advised that Healthwatch would be conducting a piece of work around pharmacies in the New Year.

It was noted that there had been a request to the previous Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Board to write to NHS England to voice the Board's concerns about pharmacy services, but it was unclear as to whether that had been actioned.

It was suggested that the government guidance should be challenged, since it was not fit for purpose and did not reflect what was happening on the High Street.

In addition to the recommendations set out in the report, it was proposed to write in support of the unforeseen benefits application and to write to Primary Care Support England to express concerns about the guidance for PNAs, and the additional pressures being placed on remaining pharmacies as a result of closures, which would make it more difficult to implement the Pharmacy First Service.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (a) To note the changes to pharmaceutical services in West Berkshire;

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- (b) To note that the changes have been assessed as not creating a significant gap in the provision of pharmaceutical services in West Berkshire;
- (c) To agree that there is no requirement to update the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment or publish a supplementary statement;
- (d) That the Chairman write to Primary Care Support England on behalf of the Health and Wellbeing Board in support of the unforeseen benefits application, and also to express concerns about the guidance for PNAs, and the additional pressures being placed on remaining pharmacies as a result of closures, which would make it more difficult to implement the Pharmacy First Service.

### 47 **Progress Report - Priority 3: Help Family and Children in Early Years**

Dave Wraight (Acting Head of Children and Family Services) presented the Progress Report on Priority 3: Help Families and Children in Early Years (Agenda Item 11).

In addition to the actions outlined in the report, it was noted that a 'hot focus session' had been held on 24 November to look at the work of the Children's Early Help and Prevention Partnership. Over 20 colleagues had attended to understand the work that was already happening and to make recommendations / suggestions about how to progress other work streams.

The Chairman indicated that the hot focus session had been very interesting and illuminating.

The Board recognised the importance of training around conflict, since conflict in relationships could cause significant harm for children in their early years.

The work around creating parenting information on the Council's website / West Berkshire Directory was noted, but Members asked how families who were not digitally enabled or who did not speak English were being served. Officers indicated that they were seeking to find touchpoints where families engaged with universal services (e.g., health appointments, libraries, nurseries / primary schools) and getting material to them in a form that they could access and understand. The Council had the ability to translate material into 76 languages, which allowed for a bespoke approach. This was an ongoing process.

**RESOLVED** to:

- (a) Note the report and progress made to date.
- (b) Agree that the actions were still appropriate.
- (c) Commit their respective organisations to deliver the agreed actions

### 48 **Better Care Fund Monitoring Report - Q2 2023/24**

Paul Coe (Executive Director – Adult Social Care) presented the Better Care Fund Monitoring Report for Quarter Two of 2023/24 (Agenda Item 12).

The Board praised the investment being made to support health and care partners to work more closely together, and were reassured by the optimism expressed about the state of the domiciliary care sector.

**RESOLVED** to note the report.

### 49 **Health and Wellbeing Board Annual Conference 2024**

April Peberdy (Interim Service Director – Communities and Wellbeing) presented the report on the Health and Wellbeing Board Annual Conference (Agenda Item 13).

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It was acknowledged there were lots of possible topics for the conference and it was difficult to distil these down to a core set of items.

There was a suggestion that poverty and cost of living issues could be addressed as part of the conference.

It was noted that the conference was an ideal opportunity to promote wellbeing and the CVD outreach programme, which was seen as a game-changer in terms of tackling inequalities.

Overall, it was felt that the proposal outlined in the report represented a cohesive group of subjects for a conference. However, it was queried whether there was an alternative forum for a broader discussion around poverty and health, since there were many conversations happening around this topic, which needed to be aired.

The Board noted that the topics would most likely touch on poverty. However, it was suggested that there could be a dedicated hot-focus session on poverty and health. This was welcomed by the Board.

**Action: Gordon Oliver to programme a hot focus session on the links between poverty and health.**

The ICB offered to provide appropriate support for the conference.

**RESOLVED** to agree the proposals for the Health and Wellbeing Conference as set out in Section 6 of the report.

### 50 **Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership - Annual Report for 2022/23**

The Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report (Agenda Item 14) was provided for information only.

**RESOLVED** to note the report.

### 51 **Health and Wellbeing Board Sub-Group Updates**

The Health and Wellbeing Board Sub-Group Updates (Agenda Item 15) were provided for information only.

**RESOLVED** to note the report.

### 52 **Members' Question(s)**

There were no questions submitted to the meeting.

### 53 **Health and Wellbeing Board Forward Plan**

The Board reviewed the Forward Plan (Agenda Item 17).

It was proposed to bring a report on the ICB's Primary Care Strategy to the meeting on 22 February 2024.

It was also proposed to bring a report on vaping / heated tobacco products and young people to a future meeting (date to be confirmed).

**RESOLVED** to note the report.

### 54 **Future meeting dates**

The dates of the future meetings were noted.

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*(The meeting commenced at 09:30 and closed at 11:08)*

**CHAIRMAN** .....

**Date of Signature** .....