

Paper to West Berkshire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 30 th September 2025	Agenda item:
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Title of Paper: Dementia Strategy – update in lieu of full paper

Paper is for: (Please ✓)	Discussion		Decision		Information	X
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Purpose and Executive Summary In lieu of the full paper requested, the ICB has provided the attached information.

Action required Members are asked to note the information provided and the intention to provide a written update prior to the December meeting.

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Date of Paper: 22 nd September 2025

West Berkshire dementia pathway - ICB update - September 2025

The West Berkshire Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee has requested an update from BOB ICB on the NHS dementia care pathway, including diagnosis rates and waiting times as well as providing information on our strategy, areas of joint working and action being taken to address the link between hearing loss and dementia. This should be considered alongside the updates being provided by our partners in this pathway, Berkshire Healthcare NHS Trust and the West Berkshire adult social care team.

A report was originally requested by the committee for the May HASC meeting but was deferred due to staff sickness in the team responsible for commissioning dementia services. Unfortunately, this capacity constraint has become a longer-term issue for the ICB, compounded by other staff shortages and the announcements of national organisational changes to ICBs which have resulted in pauses in staff recruitment.

Whilst arrangements are in place to ensure overall business continuity and support the delivery of front-line services, we regret that staffing capacity limitations are currently making it difficult in the short-term for the ICB to respond to requests for specific data reports, such as the information requested, or to provide subject matter experts with expertise in dementia to attend external stakeholder meetings.

On 09 September, the Government announced to Parliament that BOB ICB will cease to operate at the end of March 2026 and a new Thames Valley ICB will be formed from 1st April 2026. It is anticipated that the new organisation and associated operating model will develop enhanced capabilities for data reporting, analysis and insight, and stakeholder engagement to inform future HASC reports and discussions.

The BOB ICB commissioning team would like to assure the Committee that despite the challenges described above, we continue to work closely with partners to improve dementia services:

- A BOB Dementia Partnership Group is working to review diagnosis rates and further develop the joint strategy
- We are currently awaiting the findings of a BHFT review that has investigated the diagnostic pathway
- We are planning a full demand and capacity review of post-diagnostic support
- Better Care Fund (BCF) funding is being used to commission voluntary sector support for both young people with dementia and older adults, with additional funding recently allocated to the Alzheimer's Society to increase dementia care advisor capacity within West Berkshire.

We propose that a further written update is provided for Members as soon as capacity allows to address the specific information queries raised. We will strive to produce this in advance of the December HASC meeting.

Our Associate Director of Place for Berkshire West will attend the September HASC meeting to present this update, listen to members' views and concerns and to gather queries to follow up with the dementia team.

We are grateful to the committee for their patience and understanding at this particularly challenging time, as we transition to our new commissioning organisation.