

Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Communication & Engagement Strategy Update

Introduction

1. The [BOB ICB Communications and Engagement Strategy](#) was approved by the Board in July 2023. This paper outlines some areas of work undertaken between August and December 2023 to illustrate how the Integrated Care Board (ICB) is implementing the strategy and developing how we engage with our population and stakeholders¹.
2. We are looking to refresh the design and ways of working of our Communications and Engagement Function. This work will ensure that we are optimally organised to deliver our strategic objectives as an ICB. Through this work, we are particularly looking to strengthen our approach to engaging with partners, patients and our wider population.

Development of patient and public engagement

3. As we implement our ICB Communications and Engagement Strategy, we aim to create an ICB built on effective engagement and partnerships to successfully serve people across BOB. We recognise there continues to be much to do to develop our work with communities and people within BOB. As above, we are currently reviewing resources and our capability to ensure we have the right team in place to deliver this important work and to develop a culture across the ICB of working with our residents across the organisation.
4. ***Your Voice in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West engagement portal:*** The ICB continues to develop its digital engagement platform to give people across BOB the opportunity to get involved and help shape the future of health and care. '[Your Voice in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire & Berkshire West](#)' enables people to have their say on projects and proposals related to health and care.
5. People can register to be regular users of the platform and can be kept informed on work of the ICB and partners. We currently have 884 people registered on the system. We aim to run a campaign over the coming year to raise awareness of the site and encourage people to register to receive information about the work of the ICB and invitations to participate in our work.
6. ***Developing our partnerships with Healthwatch and the voluntary sector:*** We recognise the value of Healthwatch's contributions for our engagement and involvement ambitions and ensuring we can meet the needs of our population and are working closely with our five Healthwatch groups across our system. We have strong relationships with our Healthwatches, which have supported place-based projects, provided essential access to patient voices, and given detailed analysis and recommendations.
7. Healthwatch continue to provide independent scrutiny and challenge where appropriate as they are the independent health and social care champions for their places. We meet with them regularly and use their insights and public feedback to inform our strategies and plans.
8. The ICB funds our five Healthwatch groups to support place-based projects including the development of GP patient participation groups and reaching out to local communities we are not able to reach ourselves.
9. Working closely with our Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector is also key to successful engagement. We continue to work with the sector to better understand

¹ Stakeholders - a person or external organisation that may be interested or affected by the work of the BOB ICB.

people's and community's needs, experiences and aspirations for health, care, and wellbeing. The [BOB VCSE Health Alliance](#) is an important channel for engagement and we work closely with them. Through them we will be able to work with community leaders, reaching out to those affected by inequalities - strengthening relationships, building trust, and enabling the voice of people and communities to be heard.

10. **Working with our local communities and Community Connectors Programme:** There is a wide network of GP patient participation groups across BOB. Locally based groups work with their practice and with the ICB through a variety of practice-based meetings and wider place meetings. These meetings are regularly attended by ICB colleagues to share news and updates on developments within their area, receive feedback and discuss ways of widening their engagement within their communities.
11. We are a Wave 4 CORE20PLUS Connectors site and are working with the five Healthwatch organisations, our delivery partners, to develop a network of Community Connectors. The Connectors work with parents and carers of children in more deprived areas to capture their experiences of oral health and we will use these insights to drive improvements.
12. Through the Connectors programme, we have been successful in bidding for support from the Health Creation Alliance to conduct an appreciative inquiry workshop with a focus on turning insights into action. The workshop is being planned for February 2024 and will drive the development of an ICB wide action plan.
13. There are also three Community Participation Action Research projects ongoing across BOB on the Cost-of-Living Crisis exploring the inequalities faced by marginalised communities. Our community researchers are halfway through their training and in the data collection phase of their work. We expect that each organisation will analyse their data around January when they start to refine their research:
 - a. *Caribbean Community Lunch Club* – 3 community researchers are using interviews and focus groups to investigate issues around the cost-of-living crisis and mental health of the Black community in Aylesbury.
 - b. *St Vincent & the Grenadines 2nd Generation, High Wycombe* - 3 community researchers are using a survey and interviews to explore links between the cost of living and health inequalities among African, Caribbean, and Indian communities with an additional focus on maternal health.
 - c. *Healthwatch Oxfordshire working with researchers from Oxford Community Action* - 2 community researchers are exploring the reasons why people attend their foodbank service and whether it suits their needs. They plan to use the learning to improve their service as well as taking it to organisations which supply the foodbank. They are using a questionnaire and planning to develop a video.
14. **Research Engagement Network:** Across BOB we (the ICB, the BOB VCSE Alliance, [Health Innovation Thames Valley and Oxford](#) and local research organisations – the [NIHR Applied Research Collaboration Oxford and Thames Valley](#) and the [Clinical Research Network Thames Valley and South Midlands](#)) have been given money to develop a network to support better ways of working with local communities.
15. The idea of the network is to help make sure that the views of all communities are included in health and care research and healthcare planning. We want to make sure research and planning becomes more equitable.
16. We know that great work is already happening but may not always be shared with everyone who could act on it. We also know that the views of all communities are not included, and that, at times, communities can feel overburdened by requests, particularly if they do not receive

feedback. We want to understand better what is happening already so that we can improve things for everybody.

17. We are currently mapping what research and engagement is happening across BOB with local communities via a survey being shared across the NHS, local authorities, research networks and the voluntary and community sector. Feedback will be analysed, and a report produced with the aim of developing an action plan to develop a network as outlined above.
18. This work will help us to understand our public better, who we are talking to, about what and where the gaps are. From this we will develop a plan to develop our collective reach to under-represented people and communities.
19. Work to set up an independent advisory panel for the ICB has been paused while this work is undertaken. It is hoped we can get to know our population and communities better in order to identify and encourage participation in an advisory panel from those who would not normally get involved in this form of engagement.
20. **Developing a citizens' panel:** We have progressed work to develop a citizens' panels, which is a panel are made up of members of the community in the ICB who complete regular surveys / attend focus group to give their thoughts about different aspects of healthcare delivered locally.
21. Citizens' Panels should aim to be representative and are useful for getting a snapshot of the community's opinions on a particular topic. It is important to note citizens' panels can be limited in scope. However, they are a valuable tool to be used alongside other ICB engagement activities.
22. We are currently developing a business case with different options for creating and running a citizens' panel across the BOB ICS.

ICB / ICS programmes of work and campaigns

23. **Non-emergency patient transport:** The ICB is in the process of re-procuring its Non-Emergency Patient Transport Services (NEPTS) contract, with the current contract ending in March 2025.
24. With this re-procurement, the ICB's overarching aim is to commission an improved, dynamic and responsive patient transport service which ensures eligible NEPTS patients are transported in a timely, safe and efficient manner between their homes and the relevant NHS service.
25. In redesigning our current services, it is essential for us to gather the experiences and insights of non-emergency patient transport users and their family / carers. This provides us with invaluable insight to identify new and innovative ways to review the service.
26. The ICB undertook an eight-week programme of engagement, between September and November 2023, where we asked current service users and their families / carers how we could improve their experience with transport services in BOB.
27. Only a small number of responses were received (29) despite promotion through many routes including Healthwatch networks, VCSE sector networks, social media, press etc.
28. An engagement report is currently being developed and will inform the programme of work; it will also be made available on [YourVoice](#).
29. **Reading Urgent Care Centre:** The Reading Urgent Care Centre (UCC) is an 18-month pilot which is due to end in March 2024. A short survey was developed to understand patient experience and use of the UCC to input into future plans for the centre. It ran in October and November 2023 and a survey for key stakeholders and providers ran in October 2023.

30. The survey was publicised on social media, through local authority networks, featured in Berkshire West Place patient newsletter and via Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust (RBFT) internal and external publications. Staff from the ICB also visited the UCC with paper copies to encourage completion of the survey by people in the waiting area.
31. 226 responses to the survey were received. Most of the respondents were from the Reading area; 151 patients followed by 48 patients from Wokingham. Key findings included:
 - The predominant source of patient referrals was the RBFT Emergency Department, (ED) with secondary channels including recommendations from family and friends, and subsequent referrals from GP surgeries.
 - The survey demonstrates that the demands on ED, GP practices and NHS 111 would have risen due to patients seeking care from these services if they were unable to access the UCC. 88 respondents would have attended an ED if they were not able to use the UCC.
32. **Primary Care Strategy Development:** The ICB is working with health and care partners to develop a strategy and implementation plan for the future of primary care. This includes general practice, community pharmacy, optometry (eye care) and dentistry across BOB.
33. As part of this programme of work, we launched the 'Primary Care Conversation' on 17 November asking people to share their views and experiences about these services. The draft strategy for engagement was published on 10 January 2024 and is hosted on our [engagement website](#), along with an executive summary, an easy read version and word version to support access to the information to those who are visually impaired or would like to translate into a different language. People can complete a survey associated with the draft strategy or give general feedback in a number of ways.
34. Engagement will continue until the end of February. We are keen to take the time to listen to the voice of all our stakeholders and population so that these views shape the final strategy before ratification in May at the ICB board meeting.
35. **Winter communications and Urgent and emergency care:** While the need for urgent care services is a year-round challenge across the NHS and social care, it is the winter season which brings the most pressures. This coupled with on-going industrial action has meant that this year we have adapted our approach to winter communications planning to ensure activity is delivered closely and, where possible, in partnership with our NHS Trusts and local authorities across BOB.
36. Our Winter communications plan builds on the good and on-going work undertaken across the system to try to alleviate pressures on urgent care and encourage people to use services appropriately and advise residents how to stay well. Additionally, it aims to demonstrate how communications and engagement will support the health and social care system across BOB to deliver resilient, safe, effective, and sustainable care for local people over the winter period.
37. A series of dedicated campaigns and activity are being delivered throughout the winter months using national materials that are appropriate to our system requirements as well as tailored campaigns for place as required.
38. A central digital resource centre has been created to allow resources to be shared and downloaded across the different organisations and is available [here](#).
39. A [press release to launch the winter plan](#) for each place was released in October to outline how the system is working together and preparing for the busy winter months.
40. The following campaigns and activity are running throughout the winter months:
 - #StaySafeInWinter to promote the appropriate use of NHS 111, Minor Injuries and ED or 999. The campaign promotes the idea of 'choosing well' and 'making the right choice'.

- ‘Think which service’ and ‘Help us, help you’ stay well this winter; these campaigns are running throughout November, December, January and February to promote the ‘help us help you’ messages by signposting services and self-care.
- System pressures and Industrial Action support as and when required using social media assets tailored to place to support the variation in urgent care services in each area e.g., supporting getting people home etc.



41. Part of the winter communications plan is to promote support for childhood illnesses. This communication activity promotes strategies that support all children and young people to make healthier choices, and which will allow them to thrive and achieve. Social media messaging for parents and carers continues to promote:

- At times of significant pressure, we still want the public to come forward if they need help, but we want to ensure they're using the right services (e.g. they know when to go to a pharmacy, their GP practice, use 111 or call 999).
- At times when services may not be open as usual it's helpful to highlight what people can do to access urgent help

42. Activity started in November and new campaign assets were created to support as follows:

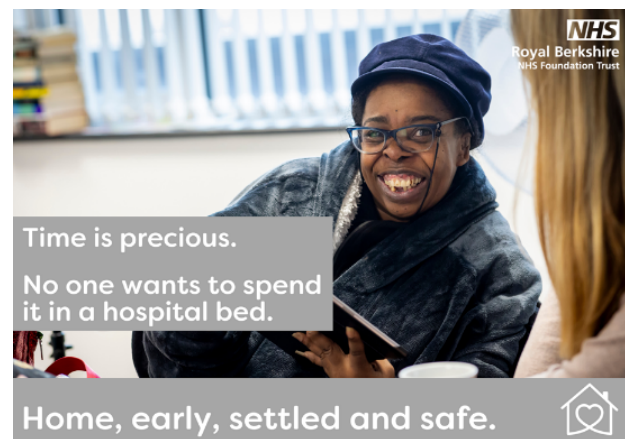


43. During September and October we created a new digital campaign to support Hospital @ Home Services in Oxfordshire. A media release to launch the new campaign is [available here](#).

44. A suite of videos have been created hosted on the Staywell-BOB website here: <https://staywell-bob.nhs.uk/hospital-at-home/> the videos are on the BOB ICB YouTube account [here](#).

45. We are working with social care partners to provide communications support around the new discharge pathways that speed up how patients are discharged from hospital and how people can be supported to get the care they need in their community.

46. In Berkshire West a suite of communications has been prepared in partnership with RBFT and Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, to raise awareness and highlight the benefits of virtual wards to NHS staff in primary care and acute settings, patients and their families. There are currently 12 virtual pathways in Berkshire West. The communications include leaflets, social media graphics and a patient case story video. BBC TV South featured interviews with Berkshire West staff and a patient in a feature on virtual wards this in December.
47. A campaign to help patients across the BOB footprint understand the different roles of healthcare professionals working at their GP practice will be rolled out over winter in a bid to ease pressure on acute settings and to educate people on how a modern GP practice now operates. A series of [videos](#) featuring a wide range of practice staff including physician associates, paramedics, care navigators and mental health practitioners has been produced. The aim is to create a better understanding of the different roles at GP practices.
48. A fresh approach to help ease winter pressure on ED within BOB has been run this year with more eye-catching messages being used across a range of social media channels. And a new campaign around discharge has also been launched to help improve flow through our local hospitals including RBFT.



49. **COVID-19 and Flu Vaccinations:** Ensuring people know who, how, what, and why they are being offered winter vaccination helps support urgent and emergency care planning and minimise hospital admissions for respiratory and associated illness from both viruses over the busy winter season.
50. Our communications activity took a flexible approach driven by regularly updated data so we could deal with localised communication challenges as they arose, as well as share best practice across the region built around previous data, insight, learning.
51. We worked with the NHS South Central and West Commissioning Support Unit to develop our own in-house resources, focussing on eligible groups identified by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation. These were shared with Place partners, residents, health and care staff, voluntary groups, and local community leaders to help us deliver the vaccination programme.
52. We also made use of national/regional level materials and successfully bid for additional funding to focus specifically on engagement with lower uptake groups.
53. Our communications focus was steered by regular reporting to help us:
- Show residents it was easy to access the vaccine when and where they are most likely to want it.
 - Provide reassurance/ motivation for those who remain hesitant, yet open to a conversation: Promoting fair information, not judgement.

- Use trusted voices/ influencers to build faith, provide validation, authentic voices, and value.

54. We used multiple channels including new [Stay Well](#) public facing webpages with maps and lists of available local clinics, bus adverts (digital screens inside and adverts outside), Pharmacy bag adverts, Spotify local press, advert vans, posters in children’s play centres, shopping centre lift door decals and large digital screens, translated FAQ leaflets, fireworks night promotion, key rings to Trust staff, community newsletters, GP Bulletin and GP practice digital screens, social media, community groups to co-design materials, mail drops and signage in low uptake areas and other printed materials.



55. Quantitative evaluation of some of the paid for aspects of the campaign between 12 September - 18 December includes:

- BOB ICB Stay Well site 9,500 views. (all materials had QR code to the webpage)
- Overall reach of 735,800 and 934,080 impressions across BOB Facebook and X platforms
- Pharmacy bags with pregnancy message: 208 direct engagements
- Spotify ads (for young people with underlying health conditions and parents of 2 and 3 year olds):
 - 497,999 impressions
 - 880 click throughs
 - 53,000 reach
 - 94% listen through rate
- Fireworks night for 2 and 3 year olds flu vaccine (Oxfordshire):
 - 19,000 adults and 5,000 children attended
 - Pre-event emails: 24,000 and post-event email: 11,995
 - Facebook: 1,154 followers, reach 17,800, 1,400 engagement
 - Instagram: 489 followers, reach 1,200, 665 engagement
 - Event digital screens: vaccine adverts displayed 60 times
 - Radio: 110 adverts delivered.
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56. **BOB ICB Stakeholder Newsletter:** The [BOB ICB Communications and Engagement Strategy](#), committed to the introduction of a BOB-wide Stakeholder Newsletter. Following engagement with communications colleagues at all our providers, local authorities and with our place directors, the first edition of the monthly newsletter will be published this month.

57. The format of the newsletter includes a section containing news and images relevant to health, social care and public health across the whole BOB system and three place specific sections with more ‘local’ interest.

58. Initially we will distribute to all BOB MPs, local authority chief executives and leaders, scrutiny committee chairs and Health and Wellbeing Boards, NHS Trust boards, Local Medical Committee chairs, Pharmacy, Optometry and Dental committees, Healthwatches, GP Patient Participation Groups (where possible) and communications colleagues across all NHS and local authority partners for cascade through their networks. There is an option within the newsletter for people to subscribe directly and it will be publicised via our social media channels to encourage members of the public to subscribe.
59. The monthly newsletter will be adapted and amended as we progress through the publication schedule and receive feedback from recipients.

Future work and next steps

60. **To progress the business case for a citizen's panel** to ensure we engage with a representative group of residents across BOB.
61. **To develop an advisory panel** which will bring together representatives from across the ICS to help develop and guide our approach to engagement. This group will provide an independent "review, check and challenge" function, and we will seek a representative membership from across our partners. The Research Engagement Network project will help inform the development of this panel.
62. **To further develop evaluation processes** so we can measure our reach and impact of communications and engagement across the system.
63. **To progress the campaign to raise awareness of roles within primary care:** there is a national campaign to raise awareness of the different roles within GP practice. We have built upon this with the production of a suite of videos featuring a range of GP practice staff to highlight the different roles within a GP practice. An awareness campaign will run early in the year as we finalise the draft primary care strategy and implementation plan.
64. **To develop a culture of involvement within the ICB:** engagement culture needs to be developed across the ICB so we can gain the trust of our local population. The culture that develops will be about *wanting* to be enriched by dialogue and other peoples' ideas and not *having* to listen. Part of our own internal programme of work will be to offer training and development opportunities for staff to share methods and ways of working with the public and benefits of doing so to encourage a who organisation approach to engagement.
65. **To implement a campaign to raise awareness of [YourVoice in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West](#)** to increase membership and audience to engage with via the digital platform.