

## **Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Sustainability and Transformation Plan (BOB STP)**

### **Q. What is a Sustainability and Transformation Plan?**

- A. The NHS and local authorities across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB) are working together to support delivery of the Five Year Forward View, which is a national plan to deliver better health, better patient care and improved NHS efficiency.

An STP is a Sustainability and Transformation Plan, or STP for short. For BOB, this plan will describe how health and social care will work together to transform the way in which we provide local services and care, ensuring local communities are the healthiest they can be while maximising the budgets that are available to us. Most transformation is being delivered through existing partnerships within local health economies. Only where working at scale across the BOB footprint adds value, will we have BOB wide programmes of work.

### **Q. What is a STP footprint?**

- A. An STP footprint is the term being used to describe the areas that an STP plan covers. In our case that is Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West. There are 44 STP footprints across the country in total.

The BOB STP footprint covers a population of 1.8 million, seven Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), six NHS Trusts and 14 local authorities.

### **Q. What are the issues that the BOB STP is tackling?**

- A. There are a number of health and wellbeing, care quality and financial challenges being faced across the BOB area. For example,
- increasing demand for services, particularly for over 75s
  - pockets of deprivation causing health inequalities, which are difficult to overcome
  - a population growing faster than expected as a result of significantly increased new housing.

- community hospital buildings which require repair and are not fit for modern needs
- variable access to some specialised treatments
- difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff due to the high cost of living
- specialist mental health services and out of area placements for patients that are not of the standard we'd like them to be.
- If we carry on as we are, there will be a financial gap of £479m by 2020.

**Q. What is the BOB STP trying to achieve?**

A. Our vision is to improve health outcomes and add value by working together and in doing so close the health and wellbeing, care and quality and financial gaps.

By this, we mean:

- providing the best quality care for patients as close to their homes as possible
- healthcare professionals working with patients and carers to ensure quick access to diagnostic tests and expert advice so that the right decision about treatment and care is made
- ensuring, as modern healthcare develops, our local hospitals keep pace by using innovation to provide high quality services to meet the changing needs of our patients
- Avoiding people being unnecessarily admitted to hospital or having to use A&E services because we can't offer a better alternative
- caring for people in their own homes where possible
- spending funding wisely to ensure the provision of consistently high quality care that supports improved health outcomes.

Together we recognise that there are some things that we could do across the BOB area to maximise the value of every pound spent and other changes that are best planned and delivered locally.

Currently, there are eight BOB wide programmes

1. Prevention
2. Urgent Care
3. Acute Care
4. Mental Health
5. Specialised Commissioning
6. Workforce
7. Digital
8. Primary care

The great majority of transformation has a more local focus, around 70% of the change needed will be developed in Buckinghamshire with our patients, clinicians and healthcare providers.

**Q. Is the BOB STP all about saving money?**

A. The financial challenges faced by the NHS nationwide are well documented and difficult decisions about how to be more efficient in the way we deliver healthcare do need to be made.

Although the NHS in the BOB area is expected to receive a 12% increase in funding in the next five years, we know that expenditure is growing at a faster rate than the money that will be available to us.

If we do nothing different, rising costs, inflation and increasing demand for NHS services will lead to a **financial gap of £479m** by the end of 2020/21. This equates to a £107m gap for funding of Buckinghamshire health services.

We aim to close this gap through efficiency savings; delivering services in more different and cost effective ways, maximising the benefits that working across a large area can bring (working at scale) and using national sustainability and transformation funding.

**Q. How will patients benefit? How will we notice the difference?**

A. People will see practical and important improvement over the next five years as a result of this plan. A more efficient system designed to encourage the integration of health and social care will allow resources to be put to better use on providing local services, reducing the need for patients to travel for treatment and enabling elderly people to stay in their own homes for longer. There will be better access to mental health services; the introduction of digital portals and self-management tools making it easier for people to access advice and care 24/7 and, with a focus on prevention, a healthier population with less health inequalities across the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West footprint.

**Q. How will it affect staff?**

A. A major part of the BOB STP plan focuses on making improvements for staff across the area. As well as specific aims to improve workplace wellbeing there are ambitions to enhance leadership capability, upskill the workforce and a shared workforce plan to increase opportunities for rotation across organisations – giving staff greater experience and enabling them to deliver better care.

**Q. What about the claims that there are to be £34m cuts to what is spent on staffing?**

- A. All aspects of what goes into delivering healthcare have been examined and as part of the wider plan some ideas about how to be more efficient in recruiting, utilising and developing our workforce have been put forward.

They seek to address long-standing difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff by making improvements to training and to terms and conditions and by taking a shared approach to recruitment from overseas. They suggest introducing a 'bank' of staff available to work across the whole patch and save money on expensive agency staff and outline ambitions to enhance leadership capability and upskill the workforce, enabling them to deliver better care. A shared workforce plan will increase opportunities for staff, including specialist doctors, to rotate across organisations and in doing so gain greater experience and deliver better care.

If all these ideas were put into place, savings of some £34m would be realised across the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB) patch over the five year lifespan of the plan and would result in workforce numbers increasing by a predicted 978 posts.

**Q. The plans will see a reduction in registered nurse numbers, won't they?**

- A. The BOB STP expects to increase nursing numbers as we move towards 2020/21. We are exploring skill mix opportunities to ensure people are working to the top of their licence and we are optimising nursing time spent on direct patient care. We anticipate that current challenges around recruitment and retention of nursing staff generally, but particularly within some specialist areas, will prevail in the short to medium term. Therefore, our aim is to ensure that our future nursing workforce, which is highly valued, is better equipped and supported to work flexibly across our various healthcare settings.

**Q. How have clinicians been involved in developing these plans?**

- A. Clinicians have been, and will continue to be, involved at all levels of the plans: at a local level, where GPs with expert knowledge of the health needs of their local populations lead on planning and decision-making about services for their local communities; at a county-wide level, through NHS providers, and at the wider STP footprint level, through expert input from the Clinical Senate, for example.

**Q. Have you had any public involvement in the development of the STP?**

- A. The STP builds on the work already happening across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West, using patient feedback and insight from past engagement and consultation activity, views from local Healthwatch organisations and clinical best practice to inform key areas of focus.

**70 per cent of the plans is not new:** these are existing plans drawn from local primary care strategies, frail older person strategies and health and wellbeing strategies – plans which we’ve been talking to staff, the public and stakeholders about for some time.

The STP is simply an “umbrella” plan which brings together these existing local plans and a number of ideas for working together on a wider regional scale, such as planning very specialised services, or ensuring our computer systems share information to avoid duplication and repetition.

However, we do want to do more to engage and communicate with the wider NHS and social care workforce about how all this fits together, particularly as we develop these initial proposals into firm project plans over the coming months. This will be a key focus for the next phase of our engagement work.

Our proposals have been informed by a range of activities, such as ‘Your Community, Your Care’ in Buckinghamshire, the ‘Big Conversation’ in Oxfordshire and Call To Action events in Berkshire West; feedback and insight from our clinicians; and strategic health needs assessments and health and wellbeing strategies from across BOB. We have also benefitted from the clinical expertise of the Thames Valley Clinical Senate, the Oxford Academic Health Sciences Network (AHSN) and the Thames Valley Urgent and Emergency Care Network.

Public engagement is critical and no changes to current services will occur without local engagement and, where required, full public consultation.

**Q. When will you publish the STP? What is taking so long?**

- A. The challenges facing the NHS are many and complex and the various partners involved are working hard to come up with the best possible proposals for tackling them. This is a new way of working for everyone and it has not been a simple process, however, the latest version of the BOB STP will be published by Thursday 21/12 and a summary document circulated to all stakeholders across the footprint.