



Newsletter

Summer 2019

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Welcome to the second edition of this newsletter which gives an update on some key projects and a glimpse of future plans.

You may have seen the announcement last week about the formation of BOB ICS which brings Berkshire West ICS together with our health and care systems partners in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire.

BOB ICS will serve 1.8 million people across the three areas and it's hoped this collective working will drive forward further improvements in health care as well as cutting costs and reducing duplication.

It will build on and strengthen the transformation work being pioneered by Berkshire West ICS which is bringing real benefits to patients, providing a wider range of health and social care options closer to their homes and using digital resources to provide a more efficient and effective health care service.

There are full details [on the NHSE website here](#).

David Clayton-Smith has been appointed to the role of Independent Chair of the new BOB ICS. He brings a wealth of health care experience to the role; full details about his appointment [are available here](#).

Two other major pieces of work are the Primary Care Networks – new ways of GPs surgeries serving their local populations, and Design our Neighbourhoods – which brings together health, social care, local government and community groups to develop ways of putting health at the heart of their communities.

There's more on this later, along with a look at our Population Health Management Programme which is giving us a highly detailed insight into the make-up of each of our communities so we can target limited NHS resources more effectively.

None of these activities are being done in isolation. They are all linked together one way or another, and all play a part in helping us to deliver more co-ordinated care. This brings big benefits to you and is also more cost effective for the NHS. It means we can devote extra time and money to transforming the NHS into the modern, tech-savvy service people now expect.

PRIMARY CARE NETWORKS – GOING LIVE IN JULY

This is a new way of working for GP surgeries and comes on stream on 1st July. Groups of them are joining together to form 14 Primary Care Networks (PCNs) – community care hubs providing not just GP services but a host of other medical, health and social care options for local people



They're aimed at cutting the need for arduous trips to hospital for treatments that can be dealt with closer to home, perhaps by a district nurse, dietician, pharmacist, physiotherapist or community mental health worker.

To make this work well, PCNs will draw on the healthcare expertise from teams at the Royal Berkshire Hospital, the voluntary sector, people working in social care and the Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust which deals with community and mental health services.

Over the last few months surgeries have been working with partners in the wider health care community along with patient groups, to make sure the PCNs meet the specific needs of their local area.

It's the first major change in the way GP surgeries operate since 2004, and PCNs promise a real revolution, developing a healthcare system that's tailor made to properly serve the diverse needs of each local community – because what's wanted in a village near Wokingham isn't necessarily the same as what's needed in an urban area of Reading. And this is where **Population Health Management** comes in.....

SPOTLIGHT ON POPULATION HEALTH MANAGEMENT

You could be forgiven for thinking this is just about a group of health chiefs poring over data, spread sheets, charts, figures and jargon. But the end result has a huge impact on patients, and how, where and when they get their treatment.

By studying the population make up of groups of patients we can look at problems that keep cropping up, or a particular band of people who keep needing treatment, and look at the best way of intervening early on and helping them.



For example, research has shown smoking rates are higher in Reading and Newbury than in Wokingham and more people are overweight and less active in Reading and around Newbury.

A deeper study of the data helps pinpoint things like people at risk of falls, those suffering mental health problems or others with respiratory problems, and this means health and social care professionals can then intervene to try and tackle problems earlier. This can prevent them turning into more serious, chronic illnesses like diabetes and heart disease – health problems that cost the NHS large sums of money and take up big chunks of staff time.

So, by tackling them early, it's not only improving people's quality of life, but also allowing the NHS to earmark vital resources to areas where they're most needed.

Katie Summers, Berkshire West CCG's Operations Director, said: "Population Health Management is giving us incredibly detailed pictures of the places we serve which means we can pinpoint gaps in the health and social care available in certain areas and identify priorities for a community.

"Of course, every person has their own unique needs and circumstances, but by working at scale across a whole population we can identify groups with similar needs who may need more specific attention and then plan and deliver health and social care services in the most appropriate way and in the most convenient places," she said.

"Another benefit of population health management is that it gives us the tools to understand patterns of demand and activity and we can then use these tools to help break the cycles of poor health," Katie added.

These cycles of poor health can often be traced to factors like poverty and unemployment, bad living conditions and poor education and this is where **Design our Neighbourhoods** comes in....

DESIGNING NEIGHBOURHOODS WITH HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN MIND

Our patch covers the whole of Berkshire West taking in 528,000 people in small rural villages and busy urban areas, so it's pointless designing a 'one size fits all' system of health and social care.



We work with a wide range of our partners to create healthy environments tailor made to the needs of the people living there. Our vision is for places where people can walk and travel safely, with access to lots of activities and events and a support network which caters for the needs of all ages.

If people live in areas where there's not much green space to play and walk dogs, where buses only run a couple of times a day, or where there's nowhere to meet up with friends it can have a big impact on their physical and mental health. They can become inactive and isolated and research shows that one in ten visits to a GP are for anxiety, stress or depression – all linked to loneliness.

The Design our Neighbourhoods initiative puts health at the heart of the community in a bid to ease pressures on NHS services.

Cathy Winfield, Chief Officer at Berkshire West CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group) said: "You'll be seeing a lot more about Design our Neighbourhoods over the coming months as we'll be organising events to meet more local community groups, talk to them about our proposals and listen to their ideas.

"To get it right, we need to establish what it is communities need and what's preventing them taking more control of their health and wellbeing. It's no use GPs encouraging people to become more active if there's nowhere for them to go, or it's too expensive for them to get there.

“By building communities that support social cohesion, physical and mental wellbeing and give people a real opportunity to take responsibility for their health and wellbeing we can free up scarce NHS resources to be targeted in areas of greater need,” she added.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WORKING PIONEERED IN WEST BERKSHIRE

One team leading the field in this approach is the West Berkshire Health and Wellbeing Board - a group of local councillors, health and social care professionals. They are forging closer working relationships with the council’s planning department to make sure new housing developments are designed with people’s health and wellbeing in mind.

CLlr Rick Jones, Chair of the West Berkshire Health and Wellbeing Board (pictured), said: “This isn’t just addressing the quality of new buildings in terms of energy use, it’s also looking at the way estates are designed and laid out to encourage walking, cycling, physical activity and social interaction.



“We want to influence the design of new developments while they’re still at the drawing board stage, so developers think carefully about how their proposals will link into existing conurbations and provide a safe, healthy environment for people,” he said.

“This means ensuring there’s decent transport links so people can walk, cycle or bus to schools, surgeries, shops and leisure facilities. We’re stressing to developers the importance of green spaces, not just for visual purposes, but for leisure too, and encouraging them to provide these areas in easy to reach spots which are safe and appealing so people want to use them,” he added.

“Whilst the Board’s focus is directed towards new developments, we’re also looking at what can be done within existing communities to make sure the health and wellbeing of people living and working there isn’t overlooked.

“The Board believes this is an area that will play a very important role in the future - signposting people to activities and groups in their neighbourhoods which can help ease their loneliness and anxiety and improve their health and wellbeing,” said Rick.

“This could be things like supporting the network of voluntary organisations reaching out to lonely people isolated in their home because they can’t drive, or young parents cut off from a wider family support network. So we’re looking at the important role **Social Prescribing** can play here,” he added.

SOCIAL PRESCRIBING – JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED

And Social Prescribing is an area of work already being championed by Reading Voluntary Action (RVA) and Age UK Berkshire, encouraging people to get out and about, meet new people and try different activities.

Research has shown health can be badly affected by things like unemployment, poor housing, debt and social isolation. Around



one in five patients consult their GP for what is mainly a social problem rather than a health one.

Dozens of local people have been referred by their GP and have benefitted from Social Prescribing, which is funded by Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Reading Borough Council

One of those people is Nisha, 78, who needed help with diet and exercise and has tried out Tai Chi, yoga, walking and mindfulness. She's also been given advice about her financial situation and signposted to local advice agencies. Nisha said: "it's given me choices I had not thought about before".

Dr Doon Lovett, from the Tilehurst Surgery, said: "A significant amount of people we see with low mood, anxiety and symptoms such as feeling non-specifically unwell, are driven by loneliness and isolation and are best helped by a 'social prescribing' approach.

"As a surgery we have been involved with the project since 2015 and I am delighted that its value has been recognised and is being promoted and rolled out as a main stream intervention," she added.

There's more information at <http://rva.org.uk/social-prescribing>.

- A study by the University of Westminster has found that social prescribing was linked with a 28per cent drop in GP appointments and also helped reduce A&E attendances and outpatient referrals.

NEW MENTAL HEALTH SCHEMES IN BERKSHIRE WEST

Seventeen Reading schools and 27 in West Berkshire have been selected to take part in a major new mental health pilot project

Berkshire West CCG was one of a handful of organisations across the country selected by NHS England to pilot the three year project.

The area has clinched more than £800k a year to run two dedicated mental health support teams (MHSTs) and they will launch their work in the schools in September before going fully live next January.

The CCG is working closely with partners from West Berkshire Council, Brighter Futures for Children, child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) run by Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust as well as parent and school representatives from both Reading and West Berkshire.



In addition to this work, a new assessment framework for children and young people coming into care is being piloted in our area. As part of the Department for Education (DfE) funded scheme, all children and young people aged six and over, who are entering care for the first time will be part of the new approach. Further details [in this bulletin](#).