

Stakeholder News

Black Country and West Birmingham Sustainability and Transformation Partnership

Welcome to the latest edition of 'Stakeholder News' from the Black Country and West Birmingham Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP). The STP is a partnership of 18 health and care organisations that share a vision to improve the life expectations of the diverse communities living in the Black Country. It includes local authorities, hospitals and other health providers and our local clinical commissioners. To find out more about our partnership go to our dedicated [web page](#).

Helen's Blog



During the last few months, we have been working with our health partners to develop an operational plan for the 2019/20 financial year. The plan describes the ambition of how we will work together to deliver healthcare improvements for people living in the Black Country and West Birmingham over the next year.

It covers priorities such as delivering care closer to home, joining-up primary and community services and providing people with more control over their own health and more personalised care when they need it.

Our improvement plan for 2019/20 represents the first year of a five-year integrated health and care plan, which will be aligned to the priorities in the NHS Long Term Plan and published locally in autumn 2019.

The five-year plan will be owned by each of our places; Dudley, Sandwell and West Birmingham, Walsall and Wolverhampton and most importantly will be developed from the experiences of local people and our valued health and care staff. Some of this work has already started to take place, with Healthwatch organisations engaging people on their views of local services.

Over the summer, we will continue to have conversations with our

patients, public and staff, so that we produce a five-year plan that truly reflects the current and future needs of service users.

Engaging and empowering our workforce will be an important feature of our improvement plans. A key highlight from this month was hosting an event to talk to local GPs about integrated care and the launch of our clinical case for change. We were delighted to have Dr. Albert Mulley, a professor at the Dartmouth Institute as a keynote speaker at the event. Dr. Mulley manages a program dedicated to building the partnerships required to achieve sustainable health care economies and is also the founding editor of the text, *Primary Care Medicine* - a resource used by many GPs in their studies. He used his wealth of experience to talk about leadership in primary care and the role GPs can play in delivering integrated services, which is particularly important to our local GPs as they start to work collaboratively as part of Primary Care Networks.

Dr Helen Hibbs

Senior Responsible Officer, Black Country and West Birmingham STP

Getting by with a little help from our friends

Health and social care organisations in the Black Country are working with voluntary sector councils to ensure peer and community support groups for people with health conditions get the support that they need.

Across the Black Country, there are hundreds of support groups offering help and advice to people living with health conditions. These groups are often set-up and run by local volunteers who have a lived experience of a health condition and who take the time to support others.

With the support of voluntary sector councils, local health and social care organisations will ensure existing or new groups get access to a wide range of training and resources, helping those that are giving and receiving support. Voluntary sector councils will also expand peer support, encouraging local people to use their own experiences to help each other.

Rob Stokes a volunteer and facilitator of a local diabetes support group Type2Together, said: “Over the years that I have been managing my own health, I have benefited greatly from a little help from friends who share my experiences of living with diabetes. Living with this condition means I have many experiences to share with people who may be in the same position as me. I find the peer support group hugely rewarding and over the last few years, I have seen the group grow into a truly supportive and empowering support network. This type of support is generally an area that is overlooked by health professionals but so many people can

benefit from the support of those experiencing the same as them and I'm very pleased that health and social care organisations in the Black Country have recognised this need."

Ian Darch, Chief Executive of Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council said: "The training and offer of on-going support is leading to a growth in the availability of peer support in the Black Country. The project, supported by local health and social care organisations, and delivered by the sub regions infrastructure organisations working closely together, recognises the huge value of the local voluntary sector and, as part of that, the need to continue to develop and support new groups of people coming together to support each other. This initiative has been really well received, with excellent feedback and a real enthusiasm among attendees to make a difference to the lives of the people that the groups support."

Dr Helen Hibbs, Senior Responsible Officer for health and social care organisations in the Black Country and West Birmingham said: "We recognise the tremendous support provided to local people through community and peer support groups. We really are blessed with a thriving community and voluntary sector to support these groups and we wanted to play our part in offering additional support to help these groups to grow and for new groups to establish."

Providing person-centred care and supporting people to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to manage their own health and care, is a key ambition of the Long Term Plan for the NHS.

If you are interested in setting up a group to support people living with a health condition, or you are part of a group that may need a little support, please contact your local council for voluntary services.

GP workforce schemes celebrated by local NHS

Local NHS organisations have introduced a number of successful workforce schemes that support GPs to stay in general practice and helps improve services for local patients.

A celebration event held in Wolverhampton earlier this month highlighted how promoting new ways of working and offering additional support to local GPs and their practices were having a positive impact on GP retention in the Black Country and West Birmingham

The workforce schemes offer training opportunities, flexible working and promote networks for newly qualified GPs and GP trainees.

Research shows that a combination of factors is leading to poor job satisfaction within general practice such as increasing workloads and lack of peer support. Overall, this is leading to an increase in the rate at which GPs are choosing to leave the workforce, or work on a part-time basis.



Dr Nisha Raithatha, a newly qualified GP from London, was struggling to progress her career after moving to Birmingham and signed up to join a network for newly qualified GPs. She said; “I just didn't know any of the GP practices or the lay of the land, so by going to the GP network meetings and getting the opportunity to talk to people, it really helped me think about where I might want to work.”

Since joining the network, Dr Raithatha made the decision to apply for a job in the Black Country and commenced her new role as a salaried GP in February of this year.

The workforce schemes aim to support local GPs who are feeling the pressure of general practice, considering leaving, changing their role or working hours and those who are newly qualified or within their first five years of practice.

Dr Helen, Hibbs, Senior Responsible Officer for health and care organisations in the Black Country and West Birmingham, said; “It is fantastic to see the positive impact these schemes are having on our local GPs, as well as attracting new GPs to work with our diverse and vibrant population. General practice is a vital part of the health and care system, so it is important we continue to develop and expand GP services in our communities.”

Recruiting and retaining family doctors is a key part of the long term plan for the NHS, which sets out how it will invest in primary and community health services, together with a pledge to recruit more than 20,000 healthcare workers over the next five years.

Picture: Dr Helen Hibbs (right) and Dr Nisha Raithatha (left).

Local services work together to prevent suicide

In March, 200 health and care staff came together to develop a joined-up plan to prevent suicide across the Black County and West Birmingham.

The suicide prevention event focussed on how everyone can work together to reduce access to means of suicide and provide better information and support to those bereaved or affected by suicide. The event recognised the need to work together to build the resilience and capability of local services and communities to prevent suicide in the Black Country and West Birmingham.

The whole community approach to suicide prevention is part of national ambition to coordinate Zero Suicide plans across the country, ensuring that suicide prevention truly becomes everyone's business.

Lesley Writtle, Chief Executive at Black Country Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, said; “It is clear that we need to be ambitious with our work to prevent suicides in our communities. We all have a part to play and by working together, we can focus our efforts and develop an

open and honest approach that will challenge some of the myths and stigma surrounding this difficult subject.”

In 2017, there were 6,213 suicides in the UK and Republic of Ireland, with men three times as likely to take their own lives as women in the UK(1).

Dr Mark Weaver, Medical Director at Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust, said; “Suicide has a devastating and enduring impact on families and communities. This is why health and care services in the Black Country and West Birmingham must work together to raise awareness amongst staff, as well as people working in the wider system to develop a joined-up approach to suicide prevention.

The event was an important opportunity for all staff and partners to agree priorities for how we can collectively tackle stigma and isolation, improve the quality of mental health support and provide better access to employment, housing and benefits, as well as ensuring that there are safe non-judgemental places in the community where people can receive compassion and support.”

Last year, the NHS set out clear recommendations on suicide prevention and reduction and made a commitment to reduce suicides by 10% nationally by 2020/21. Alongside this, was a zero suicide ambition for mental health inpatients, with organisations taking action to improve the quality and safety of their mental health services.

If you or anyone you know is having a difficult time or is struggling to cope, please call Samaritans free on 116 123.

Useful Links

NHS England Future Health and Care Bulletin

[Digital tool helps reduce avoidable lengthy stays in hospital](#)

Putting people and communities at the centre: creating the 21st century model of care.

[A free to attend, joint-hosted event by NHS England, Richmond](#)

[Group of Charities
and National Voices.](#)

Latest NHS England Blogs

[Showcasing achievements for the care of older people](#)

The National Clinical Director for Dementia and Older People's Mental Health visits North Central London, one of three Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships selected to explore innovative practices supporting work to implement the NHS Long Term Plan.

[Roller-coasters, doughnuts and Blackpool](#)

A Health Coach talks about the impact of coaching which helps people to better manage their health and care.