

Questions and answers for the ICB Board Meeting in Public – Thursday 18 January 2024

Question 1:

The prime provider contract for Bath & NE Somerset's community health and care services will be recommissioned by the ICB in 2025 with the bidding process beginning in 2024. Will there be a contract requirement for those organisations bidding for the prime provider contract to reinvest any surplus into those community services, as there is in the existing contract?

Answer:

A formal procurement process is currently underway as part of BSW ICB's Primary and Community Care Delivery Plan to redesign the way community-based health and care services operate, support the delivery of the ambitions set out in the BSW Together 'Integrated Care Strategy' and to drive forward the implementation of elements of the BSW Care Model.

As part of this process, organisations bidding for the prime provider contract are required to reinvest any efficiencies into the delivery of community services.

Question 2:

The BSW ICB will note that UNISON held industrial action on 12 December 2023 for a period of 24 hours at Wiltshire Health and Care. Further industrial action is a possibility.

Wiltshire Health and Care is a provider of NHS services in Wiltshire on behalf of the BSW ICB.

The industrial action was taken as Wiltshire Health and Care has still failed to pay the unconsolidated lump sum payment due to staff under the 2022/23 NHS Pay Award. This lump sum payment ranges from £1,655 for the lowest AFC pay band to £3,789 for the highest AFC pay band. The Chair of Wiltshire Health and Care has acknowledged that the staff are due this payment – yet it still remains unpaid.

On behalf of UNISON members delivering NHS services at Wiltshire Health and Care Jayne Jackson, Regional Organiser for UNISON asks the BSW ICB Board:

- 1. How can the ICB justify the inequity in staff pay, between NHS acute hospital staff and Wiltshire Health and Care Community Staff?*
- 2. How will the ICB services be impacted if Wiltshire Health and Care is unable to recruit or retain staff, because of pay inequity?*
- 3. Why does the ICB think that clinical staff in the community are of lower value than acute hospital clinicians?*

- 4. Why should underpaid essential staff in Wiltshire Health and Care, be concerned about the details of ICB funding deficits?*
- 5. The BSW ICB is a system leader and has a responsibility not only for the health system, but also those who work in it (as stated in your published People Strategy). What leadership or support has the ICB provided to Wiltshire Health and Care to try and resolve the dispute?*

Answer:

Thank you for your letter and questions raised. The Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board (BSW ICB) and Wiltshire Health and Care (WHC) have been working closely together with colleagues at NHS England to secure the payment of an unconsolidated lump sum for WHC staff as part of the 2022/23 NHS Pay Award.

We have submitted an application to the Department of Health and Social Care for the funding required to cover this payment. We understand that our claim has met all the necessary criteria for a payment to be made to the staff concerned and we await the Department's decision to release the funding that will enable us to pay the award. Our Chair has written this week to the Secretary of State to ask her to intervene to expedite the decision.

BSW ICB would like to assure colleagues at Wiltshire Health and Care that securing this funding is a top priority and we, along with all of our partners in the local health and care system, will continue to work closely together to seek a positive resolution to this issue.

We highly value the ongoing commitment and dedication of WHC staff, along with all of our colleagues, and we will continue to strive to make BSW a great place to work, ensure all staff feel valued and have the support they need to deliver the best possible care for our patients and communities.

We are working together across BSW to improve both recruitment and retention of staff by creating a culture in which our workforce enjoy satisfying careers, feel valued and are able to make their best contribution to help improve the health and well-being of local people.

Question 3:

- 1. Given the board's decision to take its meetings to locations throughout the ICB area, why is it not possible to arrange for virtual access to them?*
- 2. The requirement to submit public questions at least seven days before a board meeting precludes questions directly related to the agenda of that meeting. Why cannot questions be submitted after the agenda has been published since the answers are in any case not included in the agenda papers and are read out by the chair at the meeting and published later?*

3. *What is the reason for not including the name/details of the person and/or organisation submitting questions when publishing questions and answers?*
4. *Are all submitted public questions/answers taken to board meetings and subsequently published? (For information, a public question about ICB engagement activity I submitted for the November 2023 board meeting was answered in correspondence in advance but not taken to the board or published)"*

Answer

BSW ICB is committed to transparency and openness in its decision-making processes. For this reason, we hold regular meetings in public at a number of locations, in venues in Swindon, Wiltshire and BaNES to give local people an opportunity to attend these events in person as observers.

Unfortunately, very few venues are equipped with the technology to stream or virtually access meetings, and these are rarely available at the dates and times of our scheduled Board meetings. Alternative mobile streaming or virtual access solutions are costly in terms of equipment hire and staff resources, though this is something we are investigating as part of a current governance review.

The requirement for the public to submit written questions at least seven working days before the date of the meeting has been put in place to give staff time to retrieve information and formulate answers, which can be a lengthy process.

BSW ICB must comply with data protection legislation, and cannot share personal, identifiable data unless we have the individual's consent to do so. We therefore do not publish or record the names and personal details of members of the public who submit questions to us.

Submitted questions receive a written answer which is read out during the Board meetings and published online shortly after. When we receive questions after the submission deadline, or we cannot identify a question as 'question from the public to the Board', we usually respond to the enquiry by email.

ENDS