Question Submitted to the BSW, Dorset and Somerset Cluster Board - Business Meeting in Public

Meeting date: Wednesday 16th September 2026

Question

Under the new cluster commissioning structure, is the Board reviewing this cross-boundary commissioning asymmetry for children's palliative and end-of-life care, and specifically whether BSW should commission Julia's House or an equivalent complete 24/7 paediatric palliative-care service for eligible children in its footprint?

If a decision has not yet been reached, what is the remaining concrete dependency (for example population-needs assessment, service specification, funding allocation, workforce capacity, procurement/contracting, or another step), and which executive role owns that next decision?

Response:

The BSW ICB has previously met with Julia's House to discuss the commissioning of children's palliative and end of life care.

National grants for children's hospice providers, including Julias House, which come through the ICB have passed to our providers.

We recognise that hospice services for children and adults are under considerable strain at the moment through a mixture of societal changes, changes in donations & fundraising, and demand through the NHS.

Along with all ICBs and NHS England nationally, we are reviewing demand, provision and best practice for these services across the whole of our new Cluster ICB, working in collaboration with all providers of these invaluable services. We don't have a timetable for the completion of this work, not least because we await the findings of the national reviews, but the review and engagement work will start imminently as part of our full Integrated Needs Assessment work.

The commissioning Senior Responsible Officer for Children & Young People's Services is Lucy Baker, Place Director for Bath & NE Somerset. The Board level Executive responsible officer is David Freeman, Chief Officer for Commissioning & Place.