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Tuesday, 7 June 2024

**Via email**

To: All health and care staff in West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership

Cc: For sharing please.

- West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership Board
- NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board
- NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board colleagues
- West Yorkshire Clinical and Care Professional Forum
- West Yorkshire Programme and Place Leads
- Local Medical Committees
- ***Wider communication and engagement network for sharing across your channels please (you can view the letter and the infographics on the Partnership's website)***

Dear colleagues

As we work to conclude our operational and financial plans for 2024/2025, I want to reflect on what we have collectively achieved in 2023/24, and to say thank you to you and your teams for your outstanding leadership, hard work, and impact over the last year.

It's important to pause and acknowledge the remarkable achievements of our [integrated care system](#), [provider collaboratives](#), places, the thousands of individual organisations, and our teams in progressing recovery and improving people's lives across West Yorkshire over the past year.

This recognition is particularly timely, given the significant drop in public satisfaction of health and social care, and the public concern regarding healthcare. The latter is highlighted by a third of Britons seeing this as a big issue for the country, only the second time it has topped the list since the COVID-19 pandemic ([IPSOS Mori, February 2023](#)).

Following the May elections, we will intensify our communication efforts to illustrate the tangible impact we make on people's lives as an integrated care system (the [Partnership](#)) and to demonstrate value for money services to the taxpayer.



Despite industrial action, financial pressures, recent organisational changes, and other sector-specific challenges faced by the NHS, our councils and the voluntary and community social enterprise sector, our [Partnership](#) continues to recover services and to meet most standards set by Government and the regulators as we strive to deliver high-quality care and services to people.

This commitment to excellence was reaffirmed during our recent [NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board](#) (ICB) development session in April, where we also discussed the implementation of the operating model and transformation priorities. At our NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) All Staff Briefing, I also urged colleagues to take a moment to celebrate their achievements, a sentiment that was well received.

In this letter, I've highlighted a few examples of our shared successes, recognising that there are many others led locally in our places (Bradford District and Craven; Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds, and Wakefield District), across West Yorkshire and within your own organisations and teams. [You can view a series of infographics on our website.](#)

Clearly there is more to do, we are not meeting all the standards that people have a right to expect under the NHS Constitution, and we cannot be complacent. What I do hope you will note is the positive difference we make collectively and the work we do towards delivering our priorities and ambitions set out in our [Integrated Care Strategy](#) and [Joint Forward Plan](#).

### Clinical performance highlights

Your exceptional efforts have led to good clinical performance improvements across various areas of care whilst also dealing with the impact of unprecedented rounds of industrial action.

- **Accident and emergency (A&E 4-hour target):** 76% of people attending A&E were admitted or discharged within four hours of arrival in March, meeting the operational target set by NHS England.
- [Ambulance category 2 response:](#) Ambulances on category two emergency callouts in West Yorkshire reached the patient on average in under 28 minutes, within the 30-minute target set by NHS England.
- **Urgent community services:** 78% of urgent community care responses reached patients within two hours, achieving the NHS England target.
- **Elective care:** we ended the financial year with no-one waiting more than 104 weeks between referral and elective treatment, and fewer than 20 patients waiting longer than 78 weeks. [The Elective Recovery Bulletin](#) (April 2024) sets out just some of the highlights.
- **Cancer care:** The number of people waiting more than 62 days between referral and starting cancer treatment has decreased down to 476, which is lower than the national target and represents the joint lowest proportion across the country. **81% of people referred find out whether they have cancer or not within 28 days**, achieving the target set by NHS England. **68% of people with confirmed cancer have started treatment within 62 days of referral**, which is on track to deliver the 70% interim target by March 2025.



The [Cancer Alliance website](#) shares more details about achievements across the system to benefit patients right through the cancer pathway.

- **Cardiovascular disease management:** West Yorkshire is the eighth fastest ICB to recover compared to the pre-COVID position for the percentage of people with diagnosed high blood pressure but with a normal blood pressure reading (<140/90 mmHg) in the last 12 months.
- **Mental health services:** West Yorkshire is one of only five ICBs nationally achieving at least three of the six core long term plan targets relating to mental health.
- **We developed a West Yorkshire staff bank.** Over 1300 people have signed up to work flexibly across our three mental health, learning disability and autism trusts, making substantial savings in agency staff costs.
- **Dementia diagnosis:** 69.2% across West Yorkshire (against a target of 66.7%).
- **Diagnostics:** 9.7% of patients are currently waiting more than six weeks for a diagnostic test. This is above the target set nationally but better than the regional average.
- We offered a wider choice of continuous glucose monitoring devices - **to help improve the health of people living with diabetes.**

### Primary care

- **17.1m general practice appointments** have taken place with an increase of 6% since last year and 103% of the local ambition to deliver 16.6m appointments over 12 months.
- **Pharmacy First** has 494 (96%) pharmacies now signed up.
- **Cloud Based Telephony:** 57 practices have been approved for funding. 19 practices are now live with their new advanced CBT supplier.
- **87% of practices** have enabled the NHS App to allow people to see their medical records, order repeat prescriptions, manage routine appointments.
- **69 practices engaged in general practice improvement programme.**
- **There are signs of improvement since we became the commissioner of dental services.** Children accessing a dentist in the last 12 months is 60.8% (up 9.9% on the previous year) and adults 48.2% (up by 5.5% on the previous year). Both access metrics compare favourable regionally and nationally.
- Performance of the dental system and contract delivery for 2023 /2024 will become clearer over the first quarter of 2024 / 25. **Latest available data suggests delivery to be around 83% - an improvement on the same period in the previous year.**

### Commitment to community well-being

- At the end of March 2023, the ICB allocated £1million to the voluntary community social enterprise sector (VCSE), and a further £1.8 million to our Hospices (also part of the VCSE) recognising the immediate challenges faced in terms of sector sustainability.
- In April 2024, we welcomed [52 Population Health Fellows](#) bringing the number of people in West Yorkshire joining the Fellowship since 2022 to 132.
- We are providing employment opportunities through ['Project Hope'](#) for young people leaving care.



- Hosted **Neurodiversity Summits** to address challenges in transforming care with neurodivergent people.
- **Celebrated the vital role of the voluntary, community, and social enterprise sector** in delivering health and care services.
- **In January 2024 we launched the West Yorkshire Inclusion Health Unit** bringing together partners across the system to improve access and health outcomes from communities including; improved dental access for homeless populations and people seeking asylum, improving our understanding of the needs of people engaged in sex work, improving access to mental health support for inclusion health groups and development of a community board to feed lived experience into service planning.
- In March 2024, we launched the **West Yorkshire Tobacco Alliance** which will focus on reducing smoking prevalence through rolling out 'swap to stop initiatives', expanding approaches to reduce illicit tobacco, working with social housing providers and piloting stop smoking services in our emergency departments. Public health leaders in Yorkshire and the Humber welcomed the introduction of the Tobacco and Vapes Bill and the potential to eradicate smoking within a generation.

#### **Coordinated a response to a year of industrial action and winter pressures**

- **Co-ordinated urgent action across winter, during industrial action and major incidents** that have kept services safe and saved lives, with a successful system coordination centre.
- **Developed successful campaigns and services** - including 'Together We Can' campaign, with around 50,000 website visitors (March 2024), 'It's a GP practice thing' and targeted campaigns on MMR and measles outbreaks.

#### **Financial sustainability and accountability**

We have demonstrated fiscal responsibility and accountability in managing resources effectively. **This has led to achieving a break-even position for the West Yorkshire NHS system**, one of a minority in England and the only system to do so in the North of England, helping to ensure financial sustainability. This has involved managing financial pressures through non-recurrent national funding and additional flexibilities.

#### **Commitment to inequality, diversity, and equity**

Your dedication to inequality, diversity, equity, and inclusion is evident. This has included the following.

- **Embracing technology to deliver care**, monitoring, and treatment in patients' homes, ensuring accessibility and inclusivity.
- **Hosting Learning from Lives and Deaths (LeDeR) focus events** to address challenging issues in care delivery.
- **Opened up our leadership and fellowship programmes** to bring greater diversity, all sector skills to significant problems with a focus on inequity.



- Successfully implemented the [Bradford District and Craven Reducing Inequalities in Communities \(RIC\) programme](#), as highlighted in the comprehensive final report available for review.
- Became the first **Partnership of Sanctuary** in the country.
- Around **200 people joined our fourth [Adversity, Trauma and Resilience Knowledge Exchange](#)** run jointly with the West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Partnership.

In addition to these achievements, I would like to highlight the incredible efforts of some teams, for example...

- **Organising a successful palliative (end of life) care conference** in March 2024, providing valuable insights and discussions.
- **Administering 454,994 COVID-19 vaccinations** in the autumn/winter, thanks to the exceptional work of our operations and communications colleagues.
- **Conducting a thorough equality, diversity, and inclusion audit**, reflecting our commitment to diversity and inclusion.
- **Recognising the essential role of corporate affairs functions** and the Partnership's office in **supporting our governance arrangements**.
- Created a stronger partnership with [West Yorkshire Combined Authority](#) with ambitious shared goals on innovation, reducing violence against women and girls, the skills agenda, and being the first Creative Health System.
- **Furthermore, the upcoming initiatives such as new accessibility guidance** and the Accessibility Champions Training, showcasing our ongoing commitment to inclusivity and accessibility.

This has all been done with people and communities. Our [communication and involvement plan](#) sets out the Partnership programmes and NHS West Yorkshire ICB objectives for 2024/25.

We have published our annual [public involvement report](#) for the ICB and the Partnership's seventh [involvement and consultation mapping report](#). Both describe how we have involved people and communities across West Yorkshire in the work of the ICB and Partnership over the last year.

Of course, there is so much to do in West Yorkshire if we are to continue to recover in the face of increasing need for services, significant financial stress, and the outcomes of local and national elections.

The mental health of children, access to assessments for neurodivergent people, capital and estates problems and the ongoing industrial relations issues are just a few of the familiar challenges we will deal with over the medium-term as we continue to progress. Sometimes slowly, sometimes at pace, always together.



If you would like to share other positive examples, please contact [Karen.coleman21@nhs.net](mailto:Karen.coleman21@nhs.net)

Thank you again.

Yours sincerely

**Rob Webster CBE**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Webster".

**CEO for NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board  
and CEO Lead for West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership**

