

Report for Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel – Monday 11 December 2023

£40.5m NHS funding boost to improve care for individuals with a learning disability and autistic people in the South West

People living with autism and learning disabilities across BaNES are set to benefit from a £40m NHS investment to improve acute mental health care in the South West

Twenty new mental health hospital beds across the South West will help bring an end to long-distance placements, making life better both for individuals who need hospital treatment, and for their families, friends, and carers.

This will go hand in hand with improvements to local care and support of individuals with a learning disability and autistic people so they can live healthier, happier lives in their local communities.

Two new 10-bed units, in Bristol and Devon, will be designed specifically to care for individuals with a learning disability or autistic people who would benefit from treatment in a hospital and whose needs cannot be met in a mainstream mental health hospital, even with reasonable adjustments.

It is the first time systems across the region have worked together to deliver these services and while it will result in an increase in beds in the South West, it will not result in more people being admitted to hospital. Instead, only those who genuinely need to be in hospital can be, and closer to home. Only a very small number of people will require these services.

Subject to planning permission, a new 10-bed facility will be developed at the Blackberry Hill Hospital site in Fishponds, Bristol, run by Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust (AWP) and another 10-bed centre is proposed for the Langdon Hospital site in Dawlish, which would be run Devon Partnership Trust (DPT).

The new facility has been designed with input from service users, people with a lived experience, and their families and carers and will provide the kind of specialist therapeutic mental health care which cannot be provided at home or in another mainstream hospital.

Orchard house

Orchard House is our new community crisis house based in Midsomer Norton that provides step-up and step-down support for people with mental health needs. The facility, which is provided by Bath Mind, provides accommodation 365 days a year, 24 hours a day for four people at any one time.

Orchard House includes dedicated quiet and therapy space for individuals to support their recovery and reduce preventable hospital attendances and admissions as well as expediting discharge back to the community with jointly agreed safety support plans and community engagement programmes.

The team work to ensure that wider social aspects (e.g.housing, debt and benefits support, employment options) are a core part of the person's discharge plan. It opened on 4 September and to date has supported 12 people.



New resources to support patients, carers, families and health and care professionals with the discharge process

New resources are now available to help health and care professionals provide hospital patients, as well as their families and carers, with extra support before and during their onward care journey.

Colleagues working in the local health and care system have told us more needs to be done to improve the wider understanding of complex discharge pathways and processes. Many have said the current approach to discharge is confusing and has led to stressful situations for both staff and patients.

A new programme of work, Caring Steps Together, has been established to address these issues. Months of extensive research with patients and their families, along with colleagues working across acute and community hospital settings, as well as the voluntary sector, has yielded significant insights into the impact and nature of the issues and presented ideas on how to address them.

New resources are now available to help support patients, their families and carers to understand the process of leaving hospital and the other services that are available to provide support in the community. All of the resources are available on the BSW Together website (www.bswtogether.org.uk/discharge).

Industrial action

BSW Integrated Care Board continues to work hard to keep local people safe during planned strikes, while delivering the best care possible.

Junior doctors are planning to strike in December and January during what is always a very time for health and care services. The strike dates are from 7am on the 20th of December to 7am on the 23rd of December 2023 and from 7am on the 3rd of January to 7am on the 9th January 2024.

The strikes are expected to have a significant impact on services if they go ahead. BSW ICB works with partners during period of industrial action to ensure the smooth running of services and to provide a coordinated public communications campaign to let the public know how to access services and where to look for help.

Royal United Hospital performs the first HIFU non-invasive prostate cancer treatment in the South West

The Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust (RUH) has successfully treated two prostate cancer patients with an innovative high-intensity focused ultrasound (HIFU) treatment, the first time this therapy has been carried out in the region.

RUH Consultant Urologist Miss Lucy Simmons, mentored by world-leading expert Professor Hashim Ahmed of Imperial College, teamed up with pioneering cancer charity Prost8 and The UK Ultrasound Foundation to bring the treatment into the Trust.

The new HIFU unit at RUH Bath, with equipment funded by Prost8 and the UK Focused Ultrasound Foundation, integrates advanced image-guided capabilities and ultrasound energy to precisely target the prostate without any incisions or radiation, therefore sparing nearby healthy structures.

The partnership between the UK Focused Ultrasound Surgery Foundation (FUSF) and Prost8 highlights the united dedication of both organisations to advancing prostate cancer care and reshaping the treatment landscape and options available to men with prostate cancer throughout the UK. In addition, their commitment to supporting NHS Trusts, such as the RUH Bath, in improving access to HIFU.