

**Report for Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel –  
Monday 19 January 2026**

**Update on new mental health inpatient unit for people with a learning disability and/or autism**

The team building the new mental health unit – officially named the Kingfisher – has recently passed numerous milestones, including substantially completing the sample room, switching on power and water, commissioning the air source heat pumps, finishing metal framework ceilings and putting the finishing touches to the plaster work.

They've also fitted the reception desk bulkhead and the circular column encasements in the waiting area.

Despite heavy rainfall hampering progress on external work in the last month, there has still been a flurry of activity. This includes laying the first area of tarmac and resin-bound gravel, fixing planters in the activity space and adding topsoil to the south and east garden areas.

Away from construction, the Kingfisher team have been celebrating after being shortlisted in the Working Together Differently category at the recent South West Integrated Personalised Care Awards.

Emma Moody, Associate Director for Service Development and Commissioning, said: “We are all so proud of what we have achieved with The Kingfisher, working to deliver all of our changes in co-production with people with lived experience.”

The Kingfisher is expected to open to patients later in 2026.

**Uptake of flu vaccine among health and care workers**

Since 1 September, frontline health and care workers, including those working in the region's hospitals, have been eligible for a free vaccination against the winter flu virus.

Statistics from NHS England, which are [available to view online](#), show that local vaccination rates for health and care workers in each of the region's three localities are above the national level, which currently stands at 46.5 per cent.

At the Royal United Hospital in Bath, a total of 3,381 flu vaccinations have so far been carried out, which gives the trust an uptake rate of approximately 61 per cent.

In Swindon, there have been 2,990 staff flu vaccinations since 1 September, which means approximately 62 per cent of frontline workers at the Great Western Hospital have been protected against the virus.

While at Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust, 2,164 flu vaccines have been given, which puts the hospital's current performance at 60 per cent.

Staff at all three acute trusts are continually encouraged to come forward for their vaccine, with regular clinics being held both on-site and in locations across the community.

**Appeal for public support made as 2026 gets off to busy start**

The local NHS made a plea for vital public support at the beginning of the year ahead of what was expected to be the busiest week of the calendar year.

Health and care services across the region always see a significant rise in demand during the first week of January, and with this winter season adversely impacted by higher than average numbers of people catching flu, the start of 2026 had the potential to be among the most challenging in recent years.

As such, members of the public were asked, wherever possible, to choose the right NHS support, as seeking help from the most appropriate service, can help to ease pressure on hospital emergency departments and ambulance crews, while also ensuring that patients in a life-threatening condition can be seen without delay.

During the first full weekend of 2026, each of the region's hospital emergency departments saw a surge in people attending, with the Royal United Hospital in Bath seeing 881 people between Friday 2 and Sunday 4 January.

A number of actions have since been undertaken to support the system during the winter period, some of which include:

- An additional 20 beds have been commissioned at St Martins Hospital in Bath to provide further community capacity between the end of December and the end of March. These beds are now open with good patient flow and clear clinical admission criteria.
- Additional Hospital at Home capacity, which is provided by HCRG Care Group and the RUH, has been created to help reduce preventable hospital attendances and to expedite safe hospital discharges, all of which receive consultant oversight.
- A number of paediatric acute respiratory illness hubs are now up and running across BSW and are helping to provide additional community-based care, while also giving families with poorly children an alternative to hospital. The hubs in operation in Bath and North East Somerset are located at:
  - St Michael's Surgery, Bath
  - Batheaston Medical Centre, Bath
  - St Augustine's Medical Practice, Keynsham
  - Hope House Surgery, Radstock

As of Thursday 18 December, a total of 242 children and young people had been seen in one of the new hubs, which will remain in place until the end of February.

#### [Update on progress to establish local mobile dental clinics](#)

The ICB remains committed to establishing a network of local mobile dental clinics that will make accessing dentistry easier and more convenient for people living in all parts of Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire.

At the time of writing, the ICB has implemented a task-and-finish group to oversee the creation and implementation of the new clinics, with this forum due to meet on a monthly basis and featuring representation from a number of health and care partners, including, but not limited to, the three respective councils of BaNES, Swindon and Wiltshire, NHS England and local charity providers.

A draft procurement timetable was presented to the group in October and, following discussions, a number of visits to meet potential providers have been arranged.

This work, along with that which is needed to produce an effective service specification, is expected to take place over the coming months, at which time a further update will be shared with stakeholders.

