

## Public Engagement

Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust is committed to involving the public, patients and service users within Buckinghamshire in developing its services and influencing the strategic direction of the organisation.

The detail below highlights the public engagement which took place between April 2024 and March 2025.

## **Public Engagement & Involvement PSED**

At Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust (BHT), we strive to deliver outstanding care, create healthy communities and be a great place to work. Together with other health and care organisations in Buckinghamshire we aim to help people live healthier and more independent lives through:

- reducing health inequalities,
- improving the health of our local population,
- ensuring our services are value for money.

The Trust is dedicated to fostering a strong relationship with our local communities, our patients, our service users, carers and visitors to our Trust, ensuring that our services are accessible to all members of the community. This report highlights our unwavering commitment to public engagement and our ongoing efforts to identify and address any barriers that may impede access to our services.

We believe that by actively engaging with the public, our patients, our service users, our carers and our visitors, we can better understand their needs and concerns, allowing us to improve our services to be more inclusive and effective.

Through transparency and continuous improvement, we strive to build trust and confidence in our services, ensuring that they meet the diverse needs of our community.

### **Public Engagement Events -**

#### **Health and Wellbeing Days for Older Residents**

Following on from the work that took place last year, a blueprint was created to enable more community sites to run health and wellbeing older people's events for local communities. Events were held at Lane End Village Hall on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2024 and at Buckingham Community Centre on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

The aim of the events was to:

- Engage with the local community
- Educate local residents about their general health & wellbeing and reduce the likelihood of them needing to access health services in the future
- Engage with local charitable/voluntary sector organisations
- Raise awareness of local services and support

A total of 25 stand holders were present at these events providing information, guidance and advice on a range of services and support. These included including Age UK, Alzheimer's society - Aylesbury & Buckingham, Be Healthy Bucks, Prevention Matters, Bucks Mind, Carers Bucks, Breathe Easy, Swan GP Practice – Buckingham, Salvation Army, Buckinghamshire Council as well as the Trust's falls prevention, continence, rapid response and immediate care teams and representatives from the Community Assessment Treatment Service. In addition, blood pressure, weight and height checks were offered to those who attended.

A total of 73 residents attended both events and 92% of them said the event was "extremely useful".

### **Equality Monitoring**

- Attendees age ranged from 35 – 80+
- A slightly higher proportion of women attended than men.
- 55% of attendees said they had a long-term health condition or disability.
- 12% of attendees were South Asian, 8% of attendees were Black.

### **0-19 Public Health Nursing Service – Children and Young People (CYP)**

Our first health visiting **parent forum** was held in October 2024, for parents and carers of children aged 0-5 years. The forum provided a platform to share stories, particularly regarding communication and early visits with health visitors. Since the forum, the service has strengthened its links with both the local "Sparkles" parent group and the South Bucks branch of the National Autistic Society. We are delighted that a parent is going to attend two health visiting learning forums in 2025 to talk to colleagues about her lived experience. The next forum will be in May 2025 and will focus on health and development reviews.

To improve reach to **young people aged 11-19**, we continue to innovate through engagement and promotional opportunities. This year our School Nursing Service has used every opportunity to promote ChatHealth, including at secondary schools across the county, the Wendover Youth Fest, and Bucks Youth Voice Summit. At these events promotional cards were handed out with the "Health for Teens" website information and ChatHealth number, promoting young people's access to the School Nursing Service. ChatHealth has seen a 37% increase in usage over the past year, reflecting growing user engagement. Through termly lunchtime health promotion sessions, we engaged with young people and gathered valuable insights into the health and wellbeing topics that matter most to them. As a result, we now incorporate subjects such as mental health, smoking, and relationships into our public health materials and deliver interactive school events, including vaping awareness quizzes.

ChatHealth has been a rich source of **feedback from children and young people** using the School Nursing Service. The anonymous engagement of young people with ChatHealth reflects the trust they place in the responding nurses, especially evident when they continue to message after disclosing personal or sensitive issues. The top three themes from ChatHealth in 2024/25 for the 11-19-year age group were: anxiety and panic attacks; self-harm; depression and low mood.

**Engagement with Educational Settings:** In the academic year 2023/24 the School Nursing Service surveyed 107 schools asking them about the service. Overall, the **school feedback** was highly positive, with the service scoring 4.8/5 stars for communication and professionalism. Areas for improvement identified were communication around visiting times, management of time keeping for sessions and enhancing our awareness and communication when working with children with Special Education Needs and Disability. Within educational settings the school nurse team offer both group and individual sessions. Sessions are shaped around the child or young person's needs and concerns, placing their agenda at the centre and involving activities that prompt discussions around emotions, thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. The team educates young people on life skills such as managing periods, sleep, or hygiene. Sessions require active participation, and the team utilises a variety of skills to encourage positive engagement.

### **Schools Engagement Team**

Our Schools Engagement Team inspires the next generation through our innovative Bright Futures @BHT pre-employment programme which is fundamental in supporting the NHS Long-term Workforce Plan. Bright Futures has 2 strategic aims:

- Building an early talent pipeline, shaping the local labour market by educating young people about workforce needs and skills gaps to meet future patient needs.
- Creating healthier communities by promoting awareness of the economic opportunities the Trust offers as the local anchor employer

### **During 2024/2025 our Schools Engagement Team have:**

- Organised individual work experience for 16+ students across the Trust for 572 students from local secondary schools
- Around 8965 teachers, students, parents and carers engaged in careers activities.

- 54 careers events supported by the team and BHT careers ambassadors.

**Activities included:**

- Took part in the Confident Futures Skills Show at Stoke Mandeville Stadium on 11 June supporting young people with SEND to widen participation.
- Clinical psychology careers virtual drop in with Chief Clinical Psychologist
- Aylesbury Vale Academy health & social care students visited Amersham to find out about AHP and nursing roles.
- Hosted a Future Pathways Buckinghamshire visit at SMH for care experienced young people, featuring Neonatology, Radiology, OT, the NSIC and Anaesthesia
- 4th 'teacher encounter' with Bucks Skills Hub to give teachers real-life examples of linking careers to the school curriculum.
- Discover careers in...' programme of after-school talks held in SMH for Years 7 – 13: 70 attended event which featured practical activities and short tours of the blood sciences lab.
- Continued our Teacher Encounter programme, giving 5 local school the opportunity to explore behind-the-scenes at Stoke Mandeville Hospital and make curriculum connections.
- Clinical skills training day for sixth formers at The Grange school with the Simulation Team.
- Highcrest Academy students enjoyed an interactive morning at Wycombe Hospital meeting colleagues from theatres, the lab and stroke and cardiac units, as well as CPR training from the resus team.

**Health on the High Street**

The Trust opened its first 'health on the high street' 1 year pilot scheme opened on 26 September 2023 in the heart of Aylesbury within the Friars Square shopping centre. The high street plays a pivotal role in our communities as the place where people shop, meet and work. 'Health on the High Street' enables healthcare services to be delivered alongside public health and wellbeing initiatives, as well as social support services in the middle of our local town.

The unit provides services in an accessible place, within one of more deprived areas, close to public transport and in a different way to traditional methods of care including drop in advice, guidance, and support. With the aim to improve the health outcomes of the Aylesbury populations. Services provided include, immunisations, health visiting, sexual health, NHS Health checks, veteran drop-in services and more.

In addition to the services already provided within Health on the High Street this unit has also provided a unique setting for awareness days. We have celebrated two days this year for Health Day (January 2025) and National No Smoking Day (March 2025). Over 100 members of the public have attended these events which were set up to provide valuable health advice in a relaxed and focused environment.



### **Homeless clinics**

Social, economic and physical environments are major drivers of ill health and one factor determining this can be having a home. People become homeless for a variety of reasons; however, homelessness can have a major impact on health, with the average age of death for people experiencing homelessness as 45 for men and 43 for women (Crisis UK, 2022).

Whilst a proof of address is not required to register with a GP, a lack of a fixed abode can be a potential barrier. This, alongside a general distrust of authority figures and service providers due to fear of victimisation, may result in the homeless not seeking medical help.

To try and combat this, the Trust has been collaborating with the Aylesbury Homeless Action Group (AHAG) and Wycombe Homeless Connection (WHC) to provide a routine outpatient service for their clients. Clinics have been running alternatively at Wycombe and Stoke Mandeville Hospitals on a monthly basis since May 2022.

People attending the clinics have presented with medical concerns ranging from issues arising from their current lifestyle (smoking, excess alcohol consumption, skin conditions) to lack of access to long term required medication.

With the support of partners Medirest and Sodexo, each patient attending the clinic has been given a free hot meal and drink. The local Aylesbury Women's Institute has also provided knitted hats and scarves for each attendee.

### **Equality Monitoring**

- The youngest person attending the clinics was 19 years old with the oldest being 54
- 4 people considered themselves to have a long-term health condition
- 75% (6) of people attending this clinic consider themselves to have a mental health condition
- The clinic sees people from 5 different ethnic groups

- 90% of people attending this clinic are single
- 62.5% of people attending this clinic consider themselves heterosexual
- 98% of people attending this clinic are male

### **BHT Open Day and Careers Fair**

On Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2024, Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust (BHT) held an open day and careers fair. This is a public event that gives the general public the opportunity to hear from services and departments within BHT; attend some behind the scenes tours of areas that the public do not have access to ordinarily; plus, to find out about plans for the future of healthcare in Buckinghamshire.

25 stalls were present at this event representing BHT services and departments giving out details of the services they offer our local communities. BHT also ran 10 behind the scenes tours operating throughout the duration of the event. Behind the scenes tours included:

- A Mortuary tour
- A tour of our simulation suite
- A tour of our theatres
- A tour of our Upper Limb Studio (NSIC)

A careers fair operated throughout the event which held 6 talks about careers within the NHS. Approximately 582 people attended tours during this event.

AGM video: <https://www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Annual-General-Meeting-2024-presentation-slides.pdf>

Open Day 2024 wrap up video: [2024 OPEN DAY - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2024OPENDAY)



### **Movers and Shakers events**

Wycombe Multicultural Organisation (WMO) is a community charity that provides support and services that will improve the educational, economic, social, physical and spiritual

wellbeing of the c. 6,000 people in High Wycombe and the surrounding areas from African Caribbean heritage backgrounds. During the summer, WMO organised a series of 'Movers and Shakers' events to help attendees understand how to prevent healthcare issues and how to recognise if they needed to go and see a healthcare professional. The Trust provided clinical experts to go and speak to the group covering topic including memory clinics, diabetic retinopathy/ophthalmology, urine infections and how to keep your heart healthy.

On Saturday 12th October 2024, Hilltop Community Centre held its first annual Health Day. This day brought together services from the Trust (including Sexual Health, a Dementia specialist, community Respiratory team (BIRs), the stroke team and the community diabetic nursing team) and local charitable organisations to advise members about health issues that could affect their community. 75 members attended this event.

Chairman of the WMCO, Brian Lewis, said: "We wanted to organise a 6-week gathering for our senior citizens to test if there was a demand for it and were pleasantly surprised at the fantastic turnout. Each week we arranged for a discussion on common health issues affecting our senior citizens followed by a fitness programme and then finally a traditional Caribbean lunch. The feedback was very positive with 100% rating the health discussions as excellent, useful and insightful."



### **Public Engagement Forums –**

#### **Communications Advisory Panel (CAP)**

Patient, public, carer, and user involvement is a pre-requisite for developing patient-centred services. The Trust is committed to learning from the views and preferences of care givers, care receivers their supporters and local communities. The CAP aims to work with the Trust to support improvements in patient and carer communication published or approved via the Communications team. CAP is a group of volunteer patient, carer and disability group representatives who ensure that the information created and provided for patients is written

and presented in a consistent style and tone appropriate for patients and their families or carers.

Objectives of the CAP group:

- To scrutinise patient communication published by the Trust via online and offline channels (e.g. in print and on websites).
- To provide constructive feedback and appropriate challenge to help improve the standard of public information provided by the Trust.
- To help shape the design and development of Trusts public publication templates and tools.
- To contribute ideas and suggestions in discussions with the Communications team about public/patient communication developments.
- To ensure all communication is: clear, written in plain English, contains helpful images or diagrams (if required), is easy to understand and navigate.

CAP is working together with the communications team to transfer patient information from what has been primarily a paper-based set of leaflet resources to a digital set of information on the Trust website. In doing this, however, CAP is mindful that not all patients and carers can access information via digital channels and the panel champions the development of appropriate, alternative accessible sources of information in addition to these.

Over the last 12 months the panel members have reviewed 64 patient information leaflets and 6 pages on the Trust's website.

### **Equality Monitoring CAP**

CAP has a membership of 32 people. Of those 32, 30 filled out an equality monitoring form. The highlights from the results are shown below:

- 5 religions are represented within this group
- 5 ethnic groups are represented within this group
- We have an almost 50-50 split of men and women in this group
- 31% are aged between 65-79. This is the highest percentage age group within CAP
- 40% of members have a disability or long-term health condition

### **Community Hub Stakeholder Group meetings**

The purpose of the Community Hub Stakeholder Group is to ensure experiences and feedback from patients, carers, service users and the public inform the development of community hubs so that they evolve in line with the needs of local residents.

This group meets every 8 weeks, has 22 stakeholder members with representatives from both Marlow and Thame Community Hubs. During 2025/2026 the aim is to include members from the Trust's other hospital sites including Chalfont's and Gerrards Cross Hospital and Buckingham Community Hospital.

During 2024/25 this group supported and helped the Trust communicate key messages into the local communities they each represent.

### **Equality Monitoring for Community Hub Stakeholder group**

The Community Hub Stakeholder group has a membership of 22 people. 19 out of the 22 filled in an equality monitoring form. Highlights from the results are shown below:

- 3 ethnic groups are represented within this group
- 2 religions are represented within this group
- We have more male attendees in this group than female
- 36% are aged between 65-79. This is the highest percentage age group within the Community Hub Stakeholder group
- 40% of attendees have a disability or long-term health condition

The majority of the 54 combined members of CAP and the Community Hub Stakeholder group are across the age groups for 55 years and above.

The 2021 census information, 79.9% of the population of Buckinghamshire are from a white British ethnic group. This is reflected in our breakdown for CAP and Community Hub Stakeholder members as 74% of respondents are from a white British ethnic group. However, there has been an increase within Buckinghamshire in Black, Asian, mixed, or multiple ethnic groups and therefore we need to ensure our memberships reflect this. Currently 13% of our members represent Black, Asian, mixed, or ethnic groups.

### **Chiltern Prostate Cancer Group**

This group promotes awareness and supports individuals affected by prostate cancer either those with the disease or their carers.

A grant was awarded to enable the Chiltern Prostate Group to run events during 2024/5, particularly targeted at men from the Afro-Caribbean population who are at much higher risk.

An event took place on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024 which saw 195 men tested. 4% were identified as needing to consult with their GP. All these men were asymptomatic and would not have been picked up without such testing.

BHT supported this event by providing a volunteer to book patients into their time slots and give them the relevant paperwork for their tests.

In 2025/26 the Trust are working with Chiltern Prostate Cancer Support group to take on the full process of testing attendees, processing the tests and advising those who have been tested of their results. This should enable a wider audience to have access to the testing locally.