

Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee

20 February 2025

Access to General Practice

Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To scrutinise how the NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) is working to ensure effective NHS General Practice (GP) provision in Nottingham as part of recovering access to Primary Care services.

2 Action required

- 2.1 The Committee is asked:

- 1) to make any comments or recommendations in response to the ICB's report on ensuring access to GPs and Primary Care; and
- 2) to consider whether any further scrutiny of the issue is required (and, if so, to identify the focus and timescales).

3 Background information

- 3.1 GPs provide core primary medical services, including the identification and management of illnesses, health advice and referral to other services. There are 44 GPs in Nottingham, across nine Primary Care Networks (PCNs). Since the ICB last discussed access to GPs with the Committee during September 2023, there has been one GP closure (The Forest Medical Practice), the division of a PCN into two new ones (the previous BACHs PCN into the Aspire and Raleigh PCNs) and one GP re-procurement (The Windmill Practice).
- 3.2 The ICB has delegated responsibility from NHS England for the commissioning and contract management of Primary Care services. Ordinarily, the need for additional GP capacity arises due to an increase in population, such as the creation of a new housing development in an area. A change in the provision of an existing GP contract is usually due to the termination of the contract by the current GP, or because of the closure of the GP for another reason (such as a cancellation of registration by the Care Quality Commission). Ongoing review and evaluation forms part of the ICB's regular commissioning cycle and helps to identify unmet needs and any issues with the performance or quality of services. When a commissioning decision arises, this monitoring enables the ICB to consider whether additional or alternative services need to be commissioned, or whether a service is no longer needed.
- 3.3 In May 2023, NHS England published a 'Delivery plan for recovering access to primary care' in response to the capacity challenges being faced within Primary

Care and the impact that this was having on patient experience. As a result, all ICBs were required to publish a system-level Primary Care Access Recovery Plan (PCARP) in line with the national expectations regarding delivery. The Nottingham and Nottinghamshire PCARP, presented to the ICB Board in November 2023, set out the actions being taken across the four key national commitments:

- empowering patients by rolling out tools people can use to manage their own health and investing in the expansion of services offered by community pharmacies;
- implementing 'Modern GP Access' so that patients know on the day how their request will be handled based on clinical need, and continuing to respect their preference for a call, a face-to-face appointment or an online response;
- building capacity to enable GPs to offer more appointments from more staff; and
- cutting bureaucracy to give GP teams more time to focus on patients' clinical needs.

3.4 GPs are required to provide their essential services during the core hours of 8:00am to 6:30pm Monday to Friday, excluding Bank Holidays. Since October 2022, Enhanced Access has been included within the Network Contract Directed Enhanced Service, which provides core primary medical services across all PCNs from 6:30pm to 8:00pm Monday to Friday, and 9:00am until 5:00pm on a Saturday. PCNs must deliver 60 minutes of access a week for each 1,000 people in their area at locations that are accessible to all registered patients in the PCN. In addition, Local Enhanced Services provide an extended range of services that GPs can choose to provide, with the services currently commissioned by the ICB being:

- The Enhanced Services Delivery Scheme
- Warfarin Anti-Coagulation Monitoring
- Primary Care Monitoring
- Severe Multiple Disadvantage
- Safeguarding
- Asylum Seeker Health Check
- Communication Needs Adjustment

3.5 However, GP resilience continues to be challenged, impacting on both staff health and wellbeing, and on operational delivery. The Committee last reviewed the position in relation to GPs and Primary Care with the ICB at its meeting on 14 September 2023, recommending that the ICB continued to work with GPs on both prioritising the continuity of care and ensuring effective referral processes to Secondary Care services. The ICB's Support and Assurance Groups aim to provide a systematic 'early warning system' that provides an opportunity to support GPs at risk of being unsustainable. However, this is limited by the information GPs choose to share with the ICB and constrained by the level of support that can be offered by the ICB when a GP is struggling.

4 List of attached information

4.1 Report: Access to General Practice

5 Background papers, other than published works or those disclosing exempt or confidential information

5.1 None

6 Published documents referred to in compiling this report

6.1 Report to, and Minutes of, the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee meeting held on [14 September 2023](#) (Recovering and Sustaining General Practice)

6.2 Report to the ICB Board meeting held on [9 November 2023](#) (Primary Care Strategy and System-Level Primary Care Access Improvement Plan)

7 Wards affected

7.1 All

8 Contact information

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