

Closing the gap: meeting our financial challenge

Update 3: 15 July 2024

This is the third update from our Bradford District and Craven Health and Care Partnership's closing the gap programme. Closing the gap is our system-wide programme, to help us meet the significant financial challenges we face. We remain determined to use our Act as One ethos to involve all sectors in our health and care partnership as this is the only way we can make sound decisions, while acknowledging that there will be undoubted impacts that affect all of us.

In this update, we want to share details of the progress we're making and to share our prioritisation checklist we are using when assessing business cases.

Our current position

At the time of writing (July 2024) we have a planned deficit of around £40m across NHS partners in Bradford District and Craven, with a real risk that that could significantly grow. This deficit describes the difference between the money we receive (our revenue) and the money we spend. If we perform worse than planned, the **entire** deficit must be paid back, meaning that we would need to close an even bigger gap in future financial years. This is why we must work together to close this gap now.

We have made good progress since setting up the closing the gap programme as we have reduced our forecasted underlying deficit from £80-90m in December 2023 to £72m in March 2024 and our current position of £40m. While the progress has been noteworthy, we are clear that we have a long way to go, and we have some difficult decisions still to come.

Each of our place-based NHS Providers – Airedale NHS Foundation Trust, Bradford District Care NHS Foundation Trust and Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust – are working alongside our place-based NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) and VCSE and local authority partners to thoroughly review all the services each of us provides or funds. This review is designed to look at current and anticipated future needs, supported by an understanding of our communities and using data that focuses on population health groups. You may be asked to contribute to your organisation's review process as well as taking part in work we do together across our partnership. It's important that we involve as many of you as possible, as you'll have ideas and solutions that can help us meet this financial challenge including through waste reduction.

System wide review

Our most recent financial figures show that we have fallen around £3m behind our expected target at this point within the financial year. Therefore, we are now focusing our efforts on reviewing our services to look at how we can do things differently as well as identifying where unnecessary duplication occurs.

This review will look at identifying any gaps, highlight any services that are at risk, reducing activity in some areas where there is limited value (patient and non-patient facing) and moving work to other providers where it is safe to do so. We have held an initial workshop, with more planned, that also involved wider regional partners, to challenge ourselves and to use the data available to us to consider any immediate actions we can take. This includes looking at our medium and longer-term opportunities where we can plan for greater collaboration and integration. This could mean more

teams working closer together to provide support across different organisations and sectors.

If you are employed by an NHS organisation, you will have noticed new systems and processes being put in place to further manage how we use our resources. This includes freezing or slowing down recruitment, reduction on non-essential travel and stricter approval processes in place for any non-healthcare spend. By doing all we can to reduce our spending and close the gap, we reduce the risk of financial controls being placed on us. We want to avoid this and continue to make our own decisions as we have the best understanding of the needs and challenges of our communities. Thanks to all that you have been doing to help us already make good progress in closing the gap.

Transparency in decision making: business case appraisal panel

Over the coming months we expect to be making decisions that result in services changing. To help us ensure we make our decisions well, we have a business case appraisal panel that assesses stopping, pausing or continuing any new business plans as well as assessing the value of any non-recurrent projects. The business panel reflects the different sectors that make up our place-based partnership and considers the quality and equality impact of our plans.

The business case appraisal panel is an advisory group that makes recommendations to our partnership leadership executive. To help us ensure we have a fair and consistent process to making recommendations, the panel uses a prioritisation tool. This tool has a number of strict criteria that panel members have to assess each business case against. We are [sharing our prioritisation criteria with you](#), as part of our ongoing efforts to be as open and transparent as possible on the work we are doing through the closing the gap programme.

Undoubted impacts on all of us

While every effort will be made to reduce the impact of our decisions, we recognise that undoubtedly there will be short and long-term impacts when we must change the way we fund work or where we can no longer fund work. Our challenge is to limit the number of irreversible outcomes when we implement any decisions. Sitting alongside this is the duty to deliver financial balance, while ensuring we meet core health and care standards and maintaining a focus on doing all we can to tackle inequalities.

To help safeguard us from making decisions that could have unintended consequences our decision making groups have all sectors represented from the NHS, local authorities, independent care and voluntary, community and social enterprise sector. This is done through our existing governance and assurance groups, that include representatives from all sectors.

We remain committed to our vision

Using our Act as One ethos, underpinned with a commitment to tackle inequalities, we remain determined in working towards our vision of people living 'happy, healthy at home'.

In the next update on our closing the gap programme we will share details of our planned deliberative event to bring our colleagues and our communities together to work through our challenges.

In the meantime, if you have any ideas that could help us meet this challenge, please do get in touch by emailing actasone@nhs.net