

**Meeting of the Board of the Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Integrated Board in Public
9 December 2024**

QUESTION FROM A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC

Shahida Mohamed, Board Member & Treasurer at Willen Hospice

Question:

I have the following questions for the ICB Board:

- 1. Does the ICB recognise the funding crisis faced by Hospices across the country and understand what this means for the viability of our local hospices?*
- 2. I understand that only 14% of Willen Hospice's total costs are funded by the ICB. How does this compare locally, regionally and nationally? And what will be done by the ICB to ensure all BLMK hospice services are allocated a fairer share of NHS resources in the future, commensurate with the contribution they make to end of life care provision.*
- 3. The report describes the unfunded Willen at Home Service as essential. Will the ICB Commit then to funding this service in the future?*
- 4. The report also makes clear that Palliative Care Hubs in Bedfordshire and Luton are NHS funded, whereas the one in Milton Keynes relies on charitable donation. Will the ICB commit to addressing this inequity, and to funding the Milton Keynes Care hub run by Willen Hospice*

Proposed response from Sarah Stanley, ICB Chief Nurse

- Thank you for this important question which I am pleased to answer as the lead ICB Executive for Palliative & End of Life Care.
- Recognising dying and delivering personalised care and compassion for residents, their family and friends in the last few years, months and days of life is a responsibility for all within the integrated care system.
- The ICB is grateful to Willan Hospice, and all BLMK hospices, and to staff across and beyond the NHS, for the expert care they provide every day for end-of-life patients and their families.
- I will, later in this meeting, be presenting an Item on End of Life care alongside Hospice colleagues

- All hospices have been part of the review and the formation of the recommendations.
- I expect that discussion to respond in detail to several aspects of this question.
- But, in summary:
- The ICB of course recognises that there are current and future financial challenges within the Hospice sector, as there with all publicly funded services.
- Whilst the ICB does not hold information on what other systems contribute to the Hospice sector, we know from the work of Hospice UK that it varies widely across systems.
- We are aware of – and actively participating in - local and national conversations around the sustainability of the hospice sector.
- We see Willen as well as all our other hospice providers as important partners now and in the future.
- We note the issues raised, which have also been raised by the hospice Chief Executive to the ICB Chief Executive
- As can be seen from today's Board papers, we are reviewing the palliative & end of life services in BLMK and considering future requirements to ensure services as sustainable into the future – these will include consideration of the way the palliative care hub operates and also the balance between outreach services and bedded hospice care.
- Willen Hospice is an important stakeholder in working through these issues
- Without significant additional funding from government, improvement in Palliative & End of Life pathways will be delivered through improving and reforming existing pathways.
- This philosophy of co-ordinating care together as a system is at the heart of the paper the Board will discuss today.
- We look forward to working with all providers of palliative & end of life services to give the residents of BLMK good quality care at this period of their lives.