

Meeting of the Board of the Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Integrated Board in Public  
27 June 2025

**QUESTION FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

**The Leighton Linlade Health Provision Group**

**Question:**

*The Leighton Linlade Health Provision Group wishes to thank those members of the ICB that have taken the time over the past 10 months to meet with us, answer our questions and supply information for our numerous FOI requests.*

*The recent opening of the additional rooms at the Leighton Buzzard attended by Robin Porter the new head of the ICB, Wes Streeting the Minister for Health and our local MP Alex Mayer was a positive response to some of the concerns expressed by our group on behalf of the Leighton Buzzard residents surveyed in May 2023 and our petition in September 2024.*

*However, in consideration of:*

*The projected 25% population growth, our ageing demographic.*

*The merging of the BLMK ICB with three others to make one of the largest ICB's in England's and our own experience of the BLMK ICB's inability to accurately tell us where all the patients have to travel for what type of appointments, the extremely low take up of Pharmacy First and no measurement by the ICB of E-Consult to assess where it is working well and for who it is just creating an additional barrier to access?*

*You have a goal to "embrace measurement and a culture of continuous improvement."*

*So the concern for a large town that whilst having excellent GP Practices that provides 296,000 appointments, patients still have to travel to over 111,000 Outpatient appointments across the wider BLMK and the additional 56,000 appointments promised to ourselves and our MP in the meeting on the 3rd June would on paper seem to effectively double the capacity of the Clinic based upon your own 2023/24 figures but when broken down*

**Outpatient Appointments 2,472**

**Community Contacts 30,536**

**Mental Health Contacts 22,954**

*We are unclear at present what those additions really mean and how much benefit we will see in the future?*

*How can we be assured that Central Government investment is used effectively and communities within Central Bedfordshire who have been in Health Infrastructure planning limbo since January 2023 see greater transparency to future decision making?*

**Response from Felicity Cox, Chief Executive Officer, BLMK ICB**

We would like to thank members of the Leighton Buzzard Health Matters Group for their continued engagement and ensuring that concerns from residents in Leighton Buzzard are brought to our attention. We would also like to thank members of the group for joining us on 19 June for a visit by the secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Rt.Hon. Wes Streeting MP, who officially opened 7 new clinical rooms in the town.

The question focuses on four key areas. The first about the quality of data we have provided to the campaign group, the second is about growth in the town, the third is around the benefits local people can expect from the investment in these extra clinical rooms, and the fourth ensuring that Leighton Buzzard remains a priority as the ICB transitions to become the largest ICB in England.

In terms of the data, we recognise that we have been unable to provide the level of detail that the campaign group would like with regards to which health settings Leighton Buzzard residents travel to receive their care. We have advised that we are addressing this data quality issue with our providers through our contractual processes and hope to see improvements this year.

We acknowledge the significant growth projections for our area over the next 10-15 years and BLMK's position at the centre of Government's Plan for Growth. We are working with NHS England and the Department of Health and Social Care and are campaigning for a fair allocation of funding to underpin the health infrastructure our area needs. This was a message we shared again with the Health Secretary last week.

We are committed to listening to the views of residents and the launch of seven new clinical rooms at Leighton Buzzard Health Centre, which were centrally funded via NHS Property Services, are evidence of our commitment to championing the needs of residents.

In the resident survey which was shared with us in 2023, and through the petition in 2024, we heard that residents are concerned about the capacity of primary care and want urgent care services to be delivered locally.

The new clinical rooms will provide space for up to an additional 56,000 appointments a year. This will allow the Primary Care Network in the town to expand the wide range of services they offer over and above those provided by the town's three GP practices, and will provide extra capacity for community services such as physiotherapy. In particular, the extra rooms will enable expansion of the recently launched Same-Day Minor Illness Service which is delivered by a multi-disciplinary team including Paramedics, Clinical Pharmacists, Paediatric Minor Illness Nurses, and supervised by a GP.

The extra space will also provide flexibility to support future service developments. An example of this would be the ambition of the PCN and the diabetic retinopathy service to host a service in Leighton Buzzard, reducing travel for residents.

Finally, we recognise the concerns residents will have in hearing that the ICB will work closely with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ICB, and Hertfordshire and West Essex ICB. However, we remain committed to continuing to operate and strengthen place-based working, to ensure that resident voices continue to be heard. We will also continue to work with partners nationally and locally to secure the investment we need for our area.