



Building our Neighbourhood Health Service Together

Setting the direction of travel
March 2026 position statement

OneWolverhampton - working in partnership: Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust; City of Wolverhampton Council; Compton Care; Healthwatch Wolverhampton; NHS Black Country Integrated Care Board; Primary Care Networks; The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust; West Midlands Ambulance Service; Wolverhampton Homes; Wolverhampton Voluntary and Community Action.

What is neighbourhood health?¹



JOINED-UP CARE

bringing together services across the NHS, social care, and community organisations to work together rather than in isolation



PREVENTION

helping people stay well and preventing illnesses from developing or getting worse



PERSONALISED CARE

giving people more choice and control over their care



CARE CLOSER TO HOME

providing more services within the communities where people live



COMMUNITY LED APPROACHES TO CARE

making the voices of people and communities central to how health and care services are designed, delivered and evaluated



PLACE-BASED CARE

devolving budgets, service planning and decision-making to a local level

¹ <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/insight-and-analysis/long-reads/what-is-neighbourhood-health>

Contents

Foreword	5	Section 2:	
<hr/>		Our operational plan for 2026-2027, aligned to the NHS Medium Term Planning Guidance.	17
Our Approach	6	Operational Plan:	
setting the direction for travel		Objectives, Scope and Planning Assumptions	18
<hr/>		Delivery Workstreams	20
Our Principles	7	<hr/>	
Section 1:		High-level Governance Map	23
Our priorities for 2026-2027, longer term vision and strategic direction, aligned to our Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy.	8		
Priorities for 2026-2027	9		
Our Neighbourhoods	11		
Alignment with Health and Wellbeing Together Priorities	14		
Alignment with the Better Care Fund Priorities	16		

Neighbourhood Health is about bringing care closer to home, helping people stay well for longer, and reducing unnecessary time spent in hospital or care homes.

Foreword

I am proud to be the Chair of Health and Wellbeing Together². This is a statutory board where leaders from the health, care and wider system come together to work collectively to reduce health inequalities, support the development of improved and joined up health and social care services and set the strategic direction to improve the health and wellbeing of local people.

Our aim is to build a healthier city and neighbourhoods, where local people feel good and can live longer, more active lives, and where every child in the city has the best start to life.

This will be achieved by better connecting and maximising health and care resource through the three key shifts at the core of the government's health mission³:

- from *hospital to community* – providing better care close to or in people's own homes, helping them to maintain their independence for as long as possible, only using hospitals when it is clinically necessary for their care.
- from *treatment to prevention* – promoting health literacy, supporting early intervention and reducing health deterioration or avoidable exacerbations of ill health.
- from *analogue to digital* – greater use of digital infrastructure and solutions to improve care.

² <https://wellbeingwolves.co.uk/>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/10-year-health-plan-for-england-fit-for-the-future>

Over the next few months, we will be building our **Neighbourhood Health Plan together**, including through on-going public and stakeholder engagement sessions. At the heart of our approach is a commitment for health, social care, and wider partners, such as the voluntary, community, faith, and social enterprise sector, to embed integrated working as the norm, and not the exception.

To be successful will mean working in new and different ways and embracing the opportunities set out in the NHS Ten Year Health Plan to build and deliver a new Neighbourhood Health Service for the city.

In Wolverhampton, this work is being driven through our OneWolverhampton partnership, with Health and Wellbeing Together playing a key strategic leadership role.

This document sets out our direction of travel, our immediate areas of focus and longer-term ambitions as we develop our local Neighbourhood Health Plan together.



Councillor Obaida Ahmed

Chair, Health and Wellbeing Together

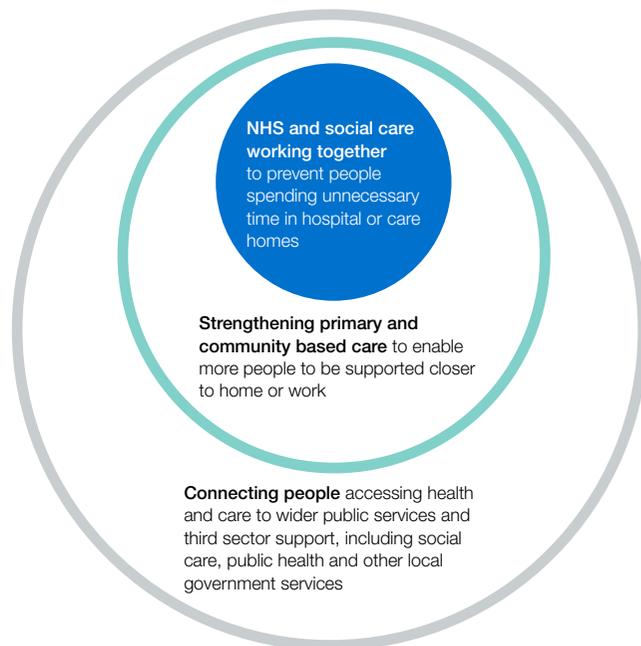
Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Community

Our Approach – setting the direction for travel

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

Neighbourhood health seeks to create healthier communities, helping people of all ages live healthy, active and independent lives for as long as possible while improving their experience of health and social care, and increasing their agency in managing their own care.

This diagram shows the aims for all neighbourhoods over the next 5 to 10 years:



It sets the national direction of travel for Neighbourhood Health - starting with a focus on the innermost circle to prevent people spending unnecessary time in hospital and care homes, and as core relationships between local partners continue to grow stronger, increasing focus on the outer circles.

In the immediate term Neighbourhood Health is expected to focus on six core components and six related steps, as outlined in the Priorities section of this document.

WOLVERHAMPTON'S APPROACH

Our approach to Neighbourhood Health is being developed through the OneWolverhampton Partnership.

Work has already taken place to identify the relevant neighbourhood geography for the city, informed by our Family Hub footprints, and four Integrated Neighbourhood Team clinical leads have subsequently been appointed.

Public and stakeholder engagement is actively taking place to shape and co-design local priorities and appropriate delivery infrastructure for each neighbourhood.

This document sets out our immediate direction of travel as we co-produce our vision for Neighbourhood Health in the city together.

Our Principles

Our principles set out how we will work together to develop and implement the vision for Neighbourhood Health in Wolverhampton.

WE COMMIT TO



Working together to prioritise and address the complex health and care issues faced by the city

THIS MEANS WE WILL

- Identify priorities collaboratively and focus on a genuinely shared agenda aimed at improving outcomes for citizens.
- Share data openly (where legal and appropriate) to build a holistic view of population needs, experiences and preferences.
- Coordinate engagement with communities and cohorts across partners.



Collaboratively (re-)design the services that respond to population need so they better align to our shared outcomes

- Redesign services based on population health intelligence and evidence, not historic configuration.
- Identify opportunities to embed prevention, focusing on maintaining health and preventing illness from developing or worsening, and working in partnership to address the wider determinants of health.
- Integrate teams where this improves outcomes, with clear roles, funding and operational arrangements.
- Use each other's insights to improve and innovate in-scope services.



Working together with local people to ensure they remain at the heart of decision making

- Communicate early, openly and accessibly; seek regular feedback and demonstrate impact.
- Ensure involvement is meaningful and inclusive, and support partners to develop participation skills.
- Adopt a strength based and trauma informed approach, focused on capabilities, protective factors and assets.



An all-age approach, built on Families First principles

- Design, deliver and commission services that work across the whole life course.
- Recognise that health, wellbeing and care needs are interconnected across ages, and that what happens at one stage of life affects outcomes later on.
- Ensure that support is centred on families as a whole, intervenes early, and prevents escalation of need



Section 1

**OUR PRIORITIES
FOR 2026-2027,
LONGER TERM
VISION AND
STRATEGIC
DIRECTION,
ALIGNED TO OUR
JOINT LOCAL
HEALTH AND
WELLBEING
STRATEGY.**

Priorities for 2026-2027

The national ambition is to support neighbourhoods in evolving over the next five to ten years. For 2026, the priority is to strengthen the core foundations of neighbourhood health by **scaling and standardising six core components of neighbourhood health** outlined in the NHS England Guidance⁴. This will help reduce unnecessary time spent in hospitals or care homes by supporting people earlier and closer to home.

Component	Description
Population Health Management	Data-driven risk stratification using integrated datasets
Modern General Practice	Enhanced access, continuity, personalised care
Standardised Community Health Services	Consistent, locally tailored community services
Neighbourhood Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs) / Integrated Neighbourhood Teams (INTs)	Collaborative teams across health, social care, voluntary sectors
Integrated Intermediate Care (“Home First”)	Short-term, community-based recovery support to avoid hospital admissions
Urgent Neighbourhood Services	Rapid local response to urgent health needs

⁴ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/neighbourhood-health-guidelines-2025-26/>

These are to be accompanied by six key steps:

- 1 Agree neighbourhood footprint
- 2 Ensure good access to high quality General Practice
- 3 Implement recommendations from Red Tape Challenge and Bridging the Gap (Primary Secondary Care Interface)
- 4 Agree out of Hospital Urgent and Emergency Care Plan/ capacities (e.g. Urgent Community Response, hospital at home, Single Point of Access)
- 5 Agree plans for Integrated Neighbourhood Teams and put on a contractual footing
- 6 Agree specialities for Outpatients Department remodelling and plan how to implement

Section 2 sets out our approach to developing an operational plan for delivering against these.

Strengthening the foundations of neighbourhood health.

Our Neighbourhoods

The first of the six steps to successful implementation of Neighbourhood Health is agreeing neighbourhood footprints for the city.

We understand that the term ‘neighbourhood’ can mean different things in different contexts, therefore we have been working with local people and partners to identify neighbourhood geographies that makes sense to local people and work best for Wolverhampton.

In our city we recognise the importance of Families First principles and a life-course approach, meaning looking at a person’s life as a whole journey – from before birth, through childhood, adulthood and into old age – and understanding how experiences at one stage affect health and wellbeing later on.

For this reason, we have identified four neighbourhood footprints informed by the location of our existing Family Hubs – to ensure a shared geography and improved transitions between children’s and adult services. These geographies are: North, South, East, and West.



WHAT ARE INTEGRATED NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAMS?

Having agreed our neighbourhood geographies we are now in the process of establishing the operational workforce that will deliver components of our Neighbourhood Health vision on a day-to-day basis.

These Integrated Neighbourhood Teams (INTs) will be local, multidisciplinary teams that bring together, health, social care, voluntary sector and community services. They will provide proactive, joined up and coordinated care – particularly for people with complex needs, improving patient outcomes by avoiding fragmented care. Each INT has appointed a GP clinical lead to represent primary care to support this work. INTs will necessarily start small as we work together to grow the approach based on local priorities and needs.

Understanding these local priorities and needs is therefore key. To support meaningful engagement and ensure community voices are central to the development of the INT model, a comprehensive involvement strategy has been taking place. This includes quarterly INT engagement sessions designed to maintain a continuous feedback loop with local residents.

Our first step in this process is building a deep, shared picture of the needs of each neighbourhood, working with professionals and our communities, to focus on:



The top health challenges
in local areas



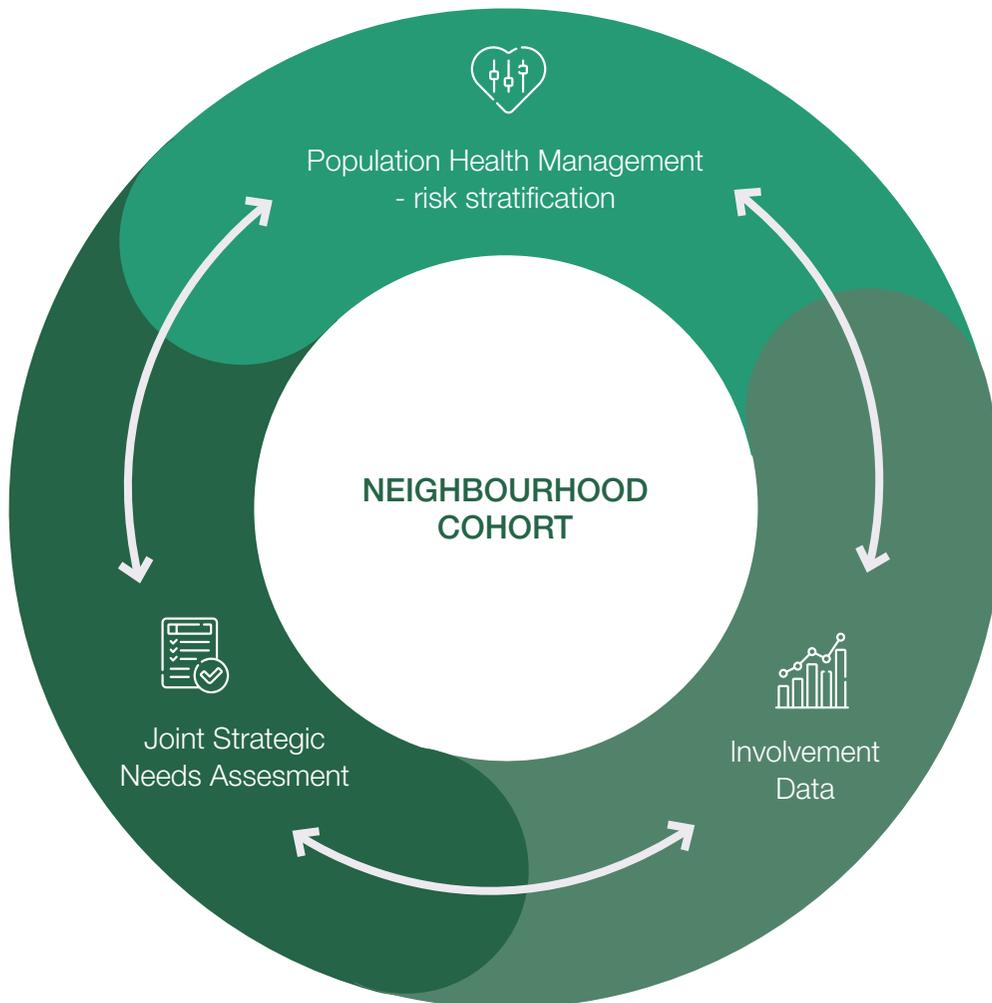
Which groups are falling through
the cracks



Where demand and service pressures
are most acute

This will help us ensure we build our INTs around real population needs and not organisational structures.

This feedback is also being triangulated with data from Wolverhampton's Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs) and Population Health Management intelligence.



OUR AMBITION FOR INTS

Through this work our ambitions for INTs over the next 12 months are to operationalise each INT based on an agreed set of local priorities and develop an outcomes framework using local intelligence to provide a strategic tool for INT leadership, aligning neighbourhood development around shared wellbeing priorities and outcomes.

Alignment with Health and Wellbeing Together Priorities

In 2023 Health and Wellbeing Together published its Joint Local Health and Wellbeing strategy for the city⁵. This was informed by the city's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), the views of local people, other community feedback and local data.

The strategy outlines the board's role in coordinating and maintaining strategic oversight of activity to improve quality and access of care and promote mental health and wellbeing, alongside a collective commitment to address health inequalities.

It also details how the board will progress its three key priority areas:

- 1** starting and growing well
- 2** reducing addiction harm
- 3** getting Wolverhampton moving

Health and Wellbeing Together also has a statutory role in signing off the local Better Care Fund plan and providing governance oversight of the pooled fund arrangements.

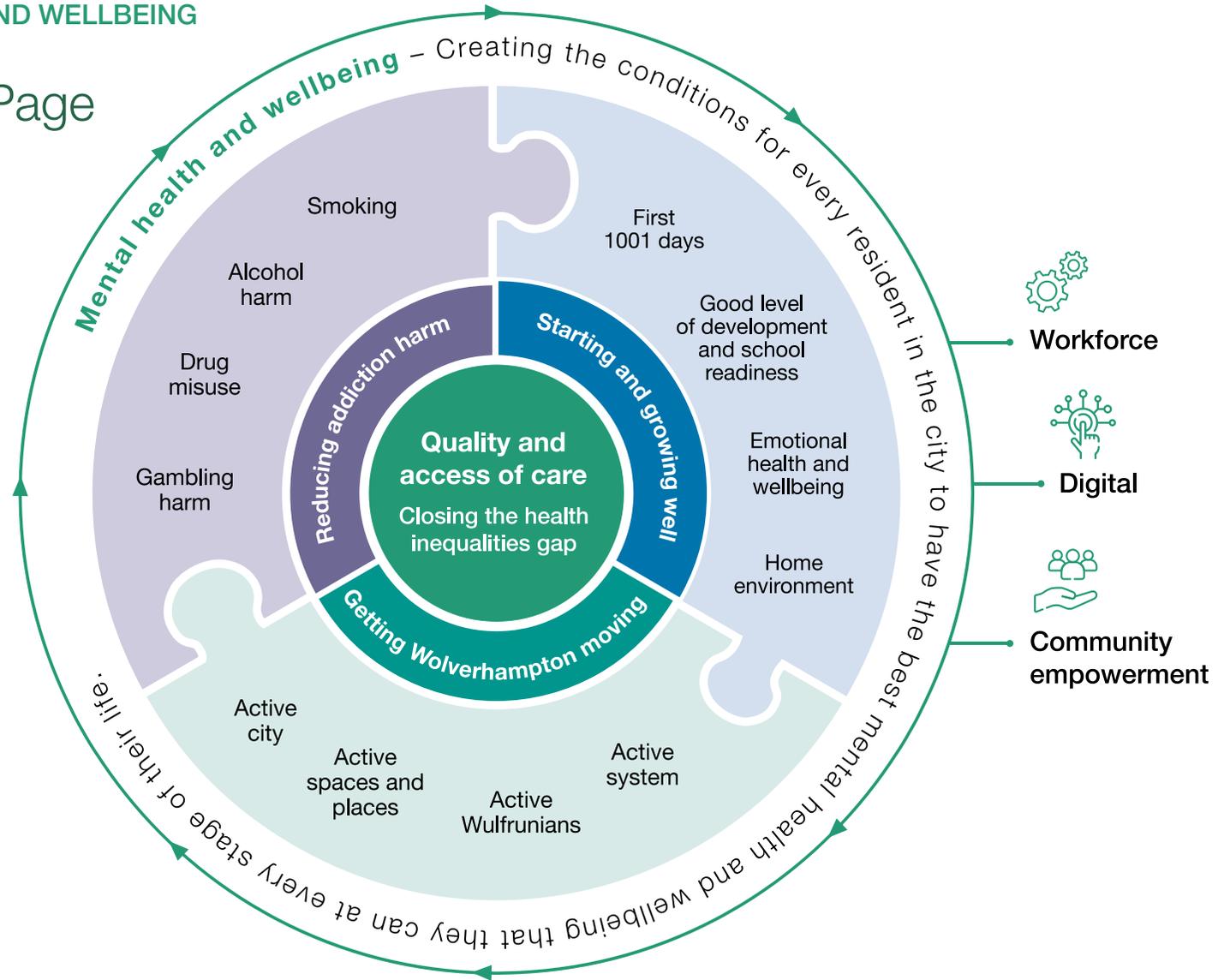
Over the course of 2027 work will commence to refresh the current Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy in conjunction with the new Neighbourhood Health Plan and ensure alignment with the Better Care Fund reform objectives, so there is a single joined-up strategic vision for the city.

During this period the governance of Health and Wellbeing Together and the OneWolverhampton partnership will be kept under review to ensure it remains fit for purpose and takes into account the changing role of the ICB as strategic commissioner, increasingly devolving decision making to Wolverhampton's Place Integrated Commissioning Committee.



⁵ <https://wellbeingwolves.co.uk/pdf/Wolverhampton-Joint-Local-Health-and-Wellbeing-Strategy-2023-2028-Final.pdf>

Priorities on a Page



Alignment with the Better Care Fund Priorities

The Better Care Fund (BCF) programme supports local systems to deliver integrated health, housing and social care in a way that promotes person-centred care, sustainability, and improved outcomes for people and carers.

The programme represents a unique collaboration between:



These four partners work closely together to support local areas to plan and implement integrated health and social care services across England, in line with the vision set out in the NHS Long Term Plan. At a local level, the programme spans both the NHS and Local Government, enabling greater alignment of health and care services so that people are supported to manage their own health and wellbeing and to live independently within their communities for as long as possible.

BETTER CARE FUND FRAMEWORK 2026-2027

Looking ahead, the BCF will evolve in response to national policy changes. In particular, the 2026/27 framework emphasises linking assurance to neighbourhood health plans and measurable local goals, rather than solely national conditions. This will have implications for funding structures, programme categories and delivery approaches at place level.

As a result, 2026/27 will be treated as a transitional year, with a requirement for a one-year plan. It is recognised that for this first year of BCF reform, it will not be possible to comprehensively integrate BCF planning and neighbourhood health planning. However, Health and Wellbeing Boards, ICBs and Local Authorities are expected to take a pragmatic approach to linking BCF plans with local priorities for more integrated health and social care.

The 2026/27 Framework Guidance places particular emphasis on strengthening intermediate care; reducing non-elective admissions for people aged 65 and over; minimising delayed discharges; improving reablement outcomes; delivering integrated home adaptations; and reducing demand for long-term residential and nursing care. It also highlights the importance of enhanced support for unpaid carers and deeper integration with the VCSE sector in delivering the overall objectives of the BCF.

From 2027/28 onwards, systems will be expected to develop longer-term plans that incorporate the substantive ambitions and long-term elements of this reform.



Section 2

OUR OPERATIONAL PLAN, ALIGNED TO THE NHS MEDIUM TERM PLANNING GUIDANCE.

Operational Plan

This Operational Plan sets out how Wolverhampton will deliver its Neighbourhood Health Plan in 2026/27. It aligns to the NHS Medium Term Planning Framework (2026/27-2028/29) and NHS England’s Neighbourhood Health Guidelines (2025/26).

OBJECTIVES, SCOPE AND PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

Primary objective (2026/27): Stand-up and embed neighbourhood delivery focused on people with complex needs; reduce avoidable hospital use and time in care homes by enabling care closer to home through Population Health Management led Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs), Urgent Community Response and Home First pathways.

Scope: Deliver the six components:



Population Health Management



Modern General Practice



Standardised Community Services



INTs/MDTs



Integrated Intermediate Care (Home First)



Urgent Neighbourhood Services



Life-course / “Think Family” approach with INT footprints mapped to Family Hubs to support transitions.



Medium-term planning trajectories apply; quarterly reporting to Place/Health and Wellbeing Board with annual refresh for 2027/28.

Delivering neighbourhood health in 2026–27

Delivery Workstreams

HIGH-LEVEL SUMMARY (ONGOING DEVELOPMENT)

Workstream 1:

Population Health Management and Intelligence

We continue to develop shared data arrangements, a common data dictionary and cohort definitions across all neighbourhood teams. Work is ongoing to refine dashboards, risk-stratified lists and routine reporting to support improvement and equity reviews.

In development:

- Shared data agreements and data standards
- Priority cohort definitions with equality considerations
- Neighbourhood dashboards and risk-based workflows
- Routine improvement and reporting processes

Workstream 2

Modern General Practice Adoption and Interface

Practices are continuing to embed Modern General Practice capabilities and strengthen access models. Work remains underway to align general practice activity with neighborhood multidisciplinary teams and develop continuity approaches for residents with complex needs.

In development:

- Consistent Modern General Practice adoption
- Blended access and structured information capture
- Single workflow into multidisciplinary team referral
- Continuity lists for residents with complex or long-term conditions

Workstream 3

Standardised Community Health Services

Partners are working toward a consistent community service offer across all neighbourhoods. Development includes shared referral standards, common documentation, minimum datasets and focused equity assessments.

In development:

- Standardised service menu and referral criteria
- Shared assessment and care-planning documentation
- Common datasets
- Equity reviews and targeted outreach

Workstream 4

Integrated Neighbourhood Teams and Multidisciplinary Team Operations

Neighbourhood teams continue to embed leadership structures, membership and operating models. Weekly multidisciplinary team processes, escalation pathways, shared care planning and all-age approaches linked to Family Hubs are being developed and refined.

In development:

- Neighbourhood team leadership and operating structure
- Weekly multidisciplinary team processes
- Escalation and step-up/step-down pathways
- All-age huddles and professional development sessions
- Consistent shared care-planning

Workstream 5

Integrated Intermediate Care (Home First)

Work is ongoing to align investment with community-based recovery, redesign transfer of care processes and expand technology-enabled care to support independence and flow.

In development:

- Intermediate care funding alignment
- Redesigned transfer of care pathways
- Technology-enabled support for step-up and step-down
- Improvements in flow and reablement outcomes

Workstream 6

Urgent Neighbourhood Services (Urgent Community Response and Crisis)

The urgent community model continues to strengthen through clearer operating standards, visibility on national directories and rapid multidisciplinary follow-up. Interfaces between primary care, urgent community response and Home First are being formalised.

In development:

- Two-hour urgent community response operating model
- Directory of Services and online access visibility
- Rapid multidisciplinary team follow-up
- Shared interface standards across services

ENABLERS (ONGOING DEVELOPMENT)



Workforce and Organisational Development

Clarifying roles, cross-skilling across neighbourhood and urgent community services, and strengthening leadership and improvement capability.



Digital and Data

Modern General Practice digital access, shared documentation, population health management dashboards and improved interoperability.



Commissioning and Better Care Fund

Aligning investment with neighbourhood priorities and national requirements.

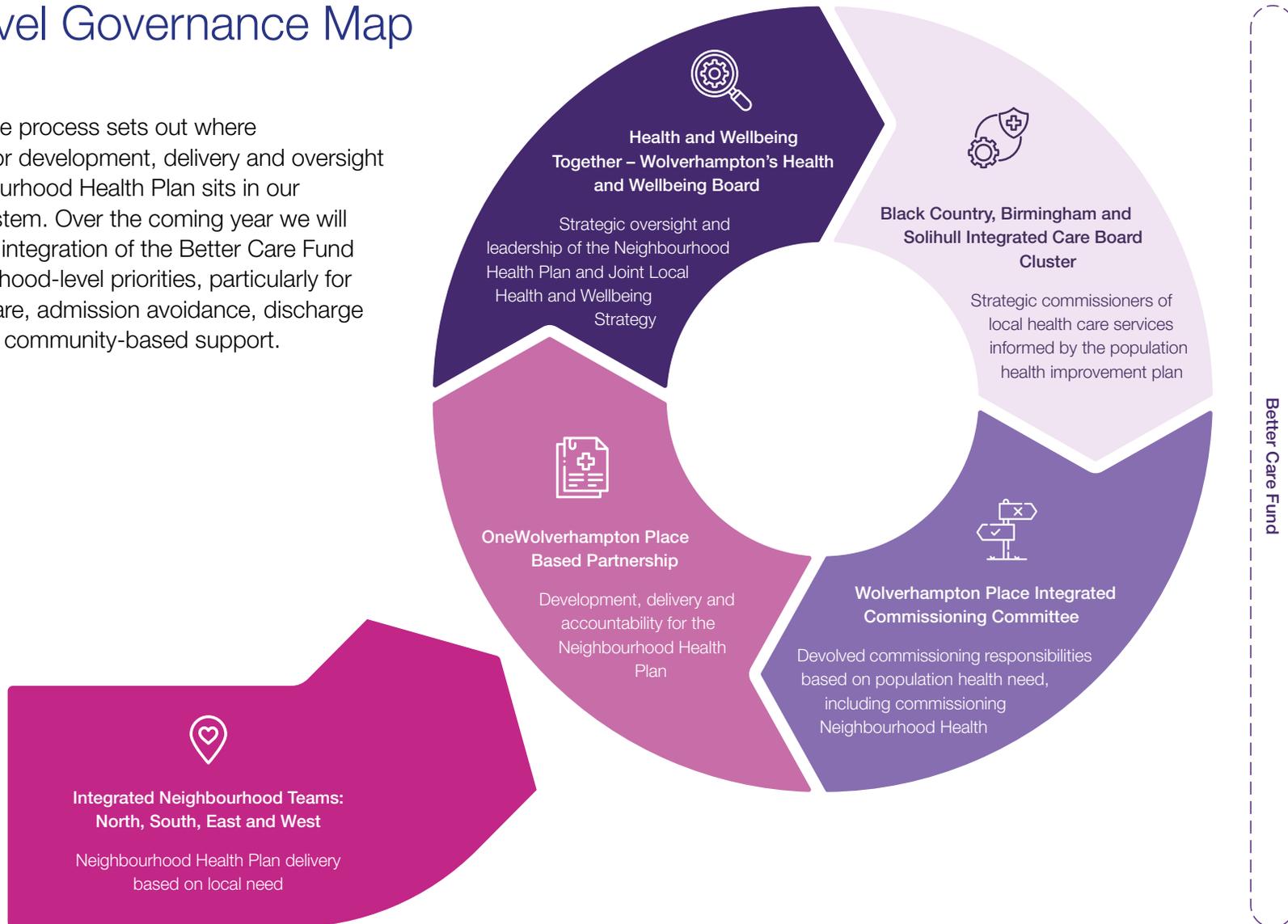


Estates

Developing co-located neighbourhood spaces linked with Family Hub access points.

High-level Governance Map

Our governance process sets out where responsibility for development, delivery and oversight of our Neighbourhood Health Plan sits in our local health system. Over the coming year we will strengthen the integration of the Better Care Fund with neighbourhood-level priorities, particularly for intermediate care, admission avoidance, discharge pathways, and community-based support.



You can get this information in large print, braille,
audio or in another language by calling 01902 551155
or emailing translations@wolverhampton.gov.uk

wolverhampton.gov.uk 01902 551155

  [WolverhamptonToday](#)  [Wolverhampton_Today](#)  [@WolvesCouncil](#)

City of Wolverhampton Council, Civic Centre, St. Peter's Square, Wolverhampton WV1 1SH