

West Midlands Cancer Alliance (WMCA) Board Briefing Note

Wednesday 26 November 2025

For the attention of WMCA Board Members, Accountable Officers, CEOs, Cancer Managers and Cancer Leads in ICB and provider organisations:

The WMCA Board met on Wednesday 26th November 2025 to review the work and progress of the partner organisations in the WMCA. The meeting was chaired by Mari Gay, Deputy Chair WMCA and Managing Director at Hereford and Worcestershire ICB. The Board had representation from all West Midlands Integrated Care Systems (ICSs). It also has representatives from Screening, Healthwatch, Public Health and patient representation.

Cancer Alliance Life Science Hub:

The establishment of a Cancer Life Sciences Partnership Hub, across the East and West Midlands, is advancing positively. The hub offers a valuable opportunity to leverage Pharmaceutical and Life Sciences expertise to drive pathway improvements, supported by a robust governance framework that ensures both scalability and sustainability. To date, eighteen companies have expressed interest in contributing to cancer initiatives, with fifty-nine applications submitted for pathway support. Roundtable events, commencing in December, will align industry offers with clinical needs. Board members voiced strong endorsement for this collaborative and innovative approach. For further information contact: alison.tonge1@nhs.net

The National Inherited Cancer Predisposition Register:

Steven Hardy, Assistant Director in the National Disease Registration Service and Consultant Clinical Scientist in Genomics delivered a presentation on the National Inherited Cancer Predisposition Register (NICPR). This is a pioneering initiative designed to support timely enrolment into screening programmes, while also laying the groundwork for future targeted screening and genomic interventions. The register has already attracted significant international interest, offering considerable potential for both research and health-economic impact. Launched in July 2025 as a world-first, the NICPR has retrospectively enrolled more than 46,000 individuals to date. For further information contact: Philip.Watson-Jones@nhs.net

Performance and Programme Update:

Performance Update:

Andy Field provided an update on cancer performance across the West Midlands. In September WMCA achieved a Faster Diagnosis Standard (FDS) performance of 76.2%, exceeding the national average by 2.3%. The Alliance's ranking has risen from 15th to 6th out of 20. Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust delivered the highest performance in the country at 86.4%, while Shrewsbury & Telford NHS Hospital Trust moved from 118th to 31st nationally.

Performance for the 62-Day Standard: improved by 2.2% year-on-year, narrowing the gap with national benchmarks. Backlog reduction strategies are underway and expected to deliver further improvements. The Board commended the significant contributions of pathway leads and highlighted the strong collaborative working across providers. For more information contact: andy.field2@nhs.net.

Screening Update:

Andrew Dalton provided a summary of cancer screening across the West Midlands. Bowel Cancer Screening threshold change (FIT@80) is underway, with early adopters already live (Hereford & Worcester, RWT, and Coventry & Warwickshire). A phased rollout plan is in place for all other West Midlands services. There is an emphasis on system-level planning due to significant additional endoscopy capacity requirements. For cervical screening national procurement of kit is underway for HPV self-sampling with rollout anticipated January-March 2026. For more information contact: stephanie.beaumont@nhs.net.

WMCA Cancer Programme Delivery Group Report:

Debra Palmer, Associate Director WMCA, provided an update on Cancer Programme Delivery. Quarter Two assurance reporting has been completed. WMCA is looking to adopt the “Days Matter” programme which uses a rapid improvement methodology for pathway change. Additional staff and funding will be directed to pathways needing extra support. Other highlights include Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin ICB has approved the Lung Cancer Screening Programme, commencement date is early December. Liver Surveillance is now operational across all 12 Trusts and pancreatic case-finding pilots have been launched. For further information contact: Debra.palmer2@nhs.net

LWBC /Personalisation Local Agreement:

Sandra Smith, Programme Manager WMCA, presented an update on personalised care. The Board was asked to endorse the embedding of personalised care into Trust contracts, as business as usual, by April 2026, in accordance with the National Cancer plan 2025/2026. Benefits include freeing up outpatient capacity and improving patient experience. The Board agreed to support formal endorsement and link to outpatient transformation programmes. WMCA will now be corresponding with Integrated Care Boards to obtain assurance of oversight and full establishment. For further information contact: Sandra.smith140@nhs.net

Planning 2026/2027 and Beyond:

The National Cancer Plan is expected to be launched in February 2026, with a strong emphasis on prevention, innovation, genomics, and quality of life. The plan will prioritise the needs of people living with cancer, ensuring quality of life is central.

Medium-term planning guidance and support has been shared with ICB Cancer Leads for systems to submit trajectories. This reinforces cancer performance standards and highlights opportunities to expand capacity via community diagnostic centres, and address workforce

gaps. For five-year plans, the West Midlands Cancer Alliance will support systems in shaping the narrative around key themes and priorities.

Cancer Alliance funding is confirmed for 3 years. It is expected that the funding will be much more targeted than previous years with detailed guidance to follow in a planning pack in early 2026. Cancer plans will then be aligned to these priorities. For further information contact: sarah.hughes25@nhs.net

Business and Governance:

Clinical Cabinet Report:

The paper was taken as read due to ratification at the Clinical Cabinet and included details on all papers ratified since September 2025. Guidelines approved in recent meetings included:

- Lung Screening Incidental Findings Papers
- WMCA Bladder Standards of Care
- WMCA Prostate Standards of Care
- WMCA Kidney Standards of Care
- WMCA Penile and Testicular Standards of Care
- WMCA Urology MDT Streamlining General Considerations
- AFX/PDS Rare Cancer Guidance
- WMCA Inter Provider Transfer Allocation Policy

Investment Committee and Finance Report: The paper was taken as read due to ratification at the Investment Committee. For further information, please contact: rwh-tr.wmca-finance@nhs.net

Patient Advocate Discussion: Phil Barrett presented a patient advocate report summarising patient advocate activities since September 2025. For further information, please contact: Carolyn.parker3@nhs.net

FEEDBACK FROM ICB CANCER BOARDS:

Representatives from each ICB Cancer Board in attendance presented updates by exception.

Birmingham & Solihull ICB (BSOL)

Work is ongoing for the Non-Specific Symptoms (NSS) pathway to ensure sustainability, including a joint meeting with Black Country ICB to strengthen collaborative NSS working.

Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin ICB (STW)

The Lung Cancer Screening programme is approved and due to commence early December 2025.

Coventry & Warwickshire ICB (C&W)

Ongoing support is being provided for the skin pathway.

Hereford & Worcestershire ICB (H&W)

Work is underway to strengthen benefits realisation for the Psychosocial pathway. Lung Cancer Screening programme rollout is anticipated from late 2025 into 2026. NSS pathway implementation plans are established and progressing. The Fit@80 programme has already identified 8 early cancer diagnoses enabling curative treatment. A revised Breast pathway is being finalised to streamline referrals and improve efficiency.

Any Other Business:

No other business was noted; therefore, the meeting was closed.

FOR REFERENCE:

For further information please contact: Sarah Hughes, Managing Director, Midlands Cancer Alliances, email: sarah.hughes25@nhs.net, Telephone: 07876 869436.

Date of next Board Meeting: The next meeting of West Midland Cancer Alliance will be on Wednesday 28th January 2026 (10am – 12pm). This meeting will be held face-to-face only. Please find below a table showing you who your West Midlands Cancer Alliance ICB representatives are:

ICB	Cancer Alliance Board ICB Representatives
Coventry and Warwickshire	Joseph Hardwicke / Richard Rawlinson Joseph.hardwicke@uhcw.nhs.uk / richardrawlinson@nhs.net
Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent	Gary Free / Helen Ashley gary.free@nhs.net / Helen.Ashley@uhnm.nhs.uk
Birmingham & Solihull	David Peake / Martin Richardson David.Peake@uhb.nhs.uk / Martin.richardson@uhb.nhs.uk
Hereford and Worcestershire	Mari Gay / Angus Thomson marigay@nhs.net / angus.thomson1@nhs.net
Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin	Ned Hobbs / Gareth Wright Ned.hobbs1@nhs.net / gareth.wright3@nhs.net
Black Country	Diane Wake / Pip Mayo d.wake@nhs.net / pip.mayo@nhs.net