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The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd. Annual Quality Report 2024 – 2025

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Introduction

The Bullen Healthcare is a 4th generation, family-owned business established in 1858 by Charles S Bullen. Since its inception, it has grown to become one of the leading home delivery companies for Stoma, Urology and Wound care products.

Bullen Healthcare evolved into The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd. in 1995 and in doing so brought several companies under the one healthcare umbrella. The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd. dispenses medical appliances against FP10 prescriptions via one of multiple dispensing appliance contractor licenses, dispenses a variety of different classes of medications, including prescription only medications, against FP10 prescriptions via its distance selling pharmacy and provides clinical care and services direct to patients via multiple commissioned services.

The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd. employs a range of registered healthcare professionals with a variety of specialist skills, training and experience, including stoma nurse specialists, urology nurse specialists, clinical pharmacists, a midwife and district nurses. The organisation has active registrations with the Care Quality Commission (CQC), the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd. collaborates with multiple other organisations, including the NHS and charities, to provide additional expert clinical support for their patients and members. Some of these collaborations have been in place for multiple years, others only commenced during the reporting period.

The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd. is a product agnostic organisation that prides itself on its ability to supply patients with products from different manufacturers. The clinicians working within the organisation have the autonomy that comes with working for an independent organisation and are not influenced, by the organisation, to only utilise or recommend products manufactured by a specific manufacturer.

The organisation continues to expand in size, number of services provided and the number of patients we care for. We are continually recruiting and training new members of staff in order to equip them with the skills required to meet the increasing demand for our services. The clinical team continues to expand both in personnel and skill mix increasing our resilience and the number of services we could potentially provide in the future.

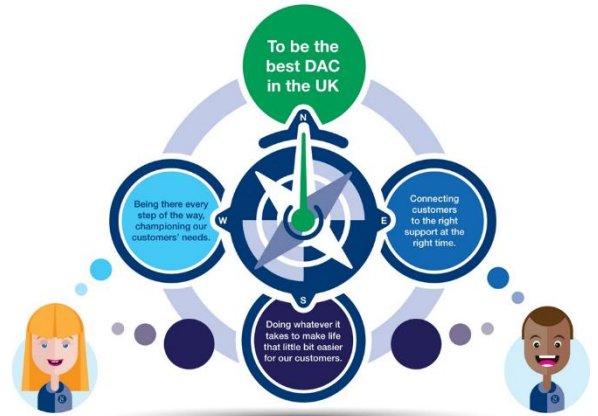
We are committed to delivering high-quality healthcare services to the communities we serve. As a private provider of NHS commissioned services, we are dedicated to providing safe, effective, and patient-centred care that meets the needs of our patients. This Quality Account report outlines our achievements over the past year and our plans for improving the quality of care we provide in the future.

The Organisation's Values

The values of the organisation are designed to help the organisation achieve its ultimate aims: The Compass Point.

"To be the best dispensing appliance contractor in the UK."

- Championing the needs of our patients;
- Doing whatever it takes to make the lives of our patients a little bit easier;
- Connecting our patients to the right support at the right time.



Trust

Strive to ensure that patients have, or develop, trust in the staff working for the organisation, which in turn develops trust of the organisation.

Respect

All staff have respect for all our patients and one another. We also strive to ensure that patients have respect for our staff as well and follow the NHS stance on zero tolerance to abuse of staff.

Innovation

Innovative work streams, projects and processes are encouraged to be explored. If specific projects or ideas have the potential to enhance the outcomes for our patients, these are prioritised for implementation as a pilot or company wide deployment.

Collaboration

Collaborative working with other healthcare organisations enables respect and clinical networks to be developed and utilised for the benefits of the patients.

Excellence

All staff are encouraged to demonstrate excellence within their role on a daily basis. Feedback is provided to ensure each member of staff knows how their work is important and how their work impacts patients, which ultimately ensures all staff understand how important it is to demonstrate excellence on a daily basis.

Statement from Paul Bullen, Chief Executive.

During the last reporting period The Bullen Healthcare Group have continued with their expansion of services provided and successfully obtained investment from a private equity company, Lloyds Development Capital (LDC), a subsidiary of Lloyds Banking Group. Securing this investment has enabled us to retain our independence from product manufacturers and has allowed us to further strengthen multiple areas within the organisation.

This enables The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd to invest in new technologies and digital solutions to support our patients, their families and the NHS to ensure we reverse the historical trends of increasing patients costs with respect to urology and stoma related appliances.

There has been some significant work undertaken focussing on prescribing data and prescribing costs to allow us to understand the prescribing trends of our own services and areas where we don't prescribe on behalf of the NHS. Attaining this greater level of understanding has subsequently enabled us to tailor our services to better meet the needs of the patient and NHS commissioners. It has also enabled us to link with multiple Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) to provide support and insight whilst also providing them with the opportunity to utilise our expertise to address their issues.

The organisation continues to go from strength to strength and is now able to rapidly increase our centralised prescribing services to more ICBs. This in turn will enable ICBs to realise prescribing cost efficiencies, address unwarranted variation in prescribing and ensure patients have access to the correct clinicians when they need access, within stoma and urology care.

Ultimately, we want The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd to continue to be recognised as the NHS's trusted, independent partner. We want to be recognised as the market leader for provision to the NHS of stoma and / or urology Appliance Prescribing Management Services.



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Mandatory Statements & Information

Statement of assurance

"On behalf of The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd., we are pleased to present our Quality Account for the 2024-25 year. This past year, we have focused on enhancing our governance processes, expanding our clinical services that we deliver to patients, and for the NHS, whilst also progressing our digital roadmap in-line with the NHS's "Digital First" strategy.

We have achieved significant improvements in these areas and developed new relationships, whilst also strengthening existing relationships, with Integrated Care Boards. We will continue to build on these achievements and work towards delivering even better outcomes for our patients and the NHS in the future."

Provision of Services

The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd. delivers a variety of services for, and in collaboration with, our charity partners and NHS commissioners. Assurance and feedback is provided direct to our relevant charity partners and is not covered within this quality account. The following services are delivered direct to patients, all of which are commissioned by a variety of NHS organisations:

Appliance Use Reviews (AURs)

Appliance Use Reviews ensure that patients are obtaining the best outcomes from the appliances they are prescribed and ensures they are using them correctly. They are delivered by an appropriately trained and registered clinician via one of the dispensing appliance contractor licenses. This service is a service that is commissioned by NHSE.

Essential and Advanced Services (Pharmacy)

The distance selling pharmacy, Bullen Lewis & Partners Ltd. t/a Pharmore plus, delivers essential services and some advanced services as outlined in the Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF).

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Glacier Buildings, Brunswick Business Park, Harrington Rd, Liverpool L3 4BH

Stoma Appliance Customisation (SAC)

Stoma appliance customisation is an advanced service that was introduced into the English Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF). It provides patients with products that are customised to ensure correct and comfortable fitting of a stoma appliance. It is delivered via the dispensing appliance contractor licenses and is a service commissioned by NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I).

The Bedford, Luton and Milton Keynes Stoma Prescribing Service (BLMK SPS)

The BLMK SPS is a service that undertakes the prescribing of appliances for patients with a stoma, removing this task from GP practices. It was launched in June 2023 with the onboarding of 2,300 patients with a stoma registered with a GP practice within BLMK ICB.

The Liverpool Urology Appliance Management Service (LUAMS).

Commissioned by NHS Liverpool Place and commenced in 2017. It is a centralised prescribing and clinical review service for patients prescribed an appliance associated with urology care and registered with a GP practice within NHS Liverpool Place. The service provides care for in excess of 2,000 local patients that require appliances for urology associated needs.

The Merseyside and Region Stoma Service (MARSS)

Commissioned by a six NHS Places within the Cheshire and Merseyside ICB. The service delivers centralised prescribing for patients with a stoma formation (including those with a fistula) registered with a GP within one of these NHS Places, and ongoing clinical care for patients in this area, with the exception of those registered with a GP practice within NHS Warrington Place. It commenced in June 2021 and now provides care for in excess of 5,000 local patients with a stoma formation within NHS Halton Place, NHS Knowsley Place, NHS Liverpool Place, NHS St Helens Place, NHS Warrington Place and NHS Wirral Place.

The Norfolk & Waveney Appliance Prescribing Management Service (APMS)

This service, which was commissioned by Norfolk & Waveney ICB, launched in November 2023. It has initially launched as a pilot involving 15 GP practices, for which the service now undertakes the ongoing prescribing of appliances for patients with a stoma and for those who have a urology appliance need. The service cares for around 1,000 patients and removes the ongoing prescribing and management function for these patients from their GP practice.

Statutory and Mandatory Registrations as an organisation

The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd is a group of individual organisations, many of which have specific requirements for statutory and/or mandatory registrations in order to safely and legally operate. The following statutory and mandatory registrations are held by organisations within The Bullen Healthcare Group.

Data Security and Protection Toolkit

The Bullen Healthcare Group completes the NHS Digital Data Security and Protection Toolkit on an annual basis. The 2023-2024 standards were met and published 27th June 2024, with the standards for 2024-2025 due to be published before 30th June 2025.

ISO 9001

The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd. is ISO 9001 (Quality Management Systems) accredited with the latest audit being undertaken in December 2023 with no issues reported.

ISO 14001

The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd. is ISO 14001 (Environmental Management Systems) accredited with the latest audit being undertaken in December 2023 with no issues reported.

Cyber Essentials and Cyber Essentials Plus

The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd hold Cyber Essentials and Cyber Essentials plus with the annual accreditations being undertaken in April.

The Care Quality Commission

The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd. has an active registration with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) with the latest inspection, conducted in November 2021, rating the service as good. Each of the parameters, Safe, Effective, Caring, Responsive and Well-led were all rated as good. This was the first inspection undertaken by CQC, with the report available here: <https://api.cqc.org.uk/public/v1/reports/4dafd6d4-f47f-48d0-a221-8f8c8537bd32?20220117080202>

There were no concerns raised to or from CQC during the reporting period about any of the services that The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd. currently provide. The last review was undertaken during the reporting period, on the 6th July 2023, in which CQC stated they did not find any evidence of the need to reassess the rating at this stage.

The General Pharmaceutical Council

Bullen Lewis & Partners Ltd t/a Pharmore plus is the distance selling pharmacy, which is part of The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd. It has an active and valid registration with the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC), registration number 1117847, but has not yet been inspected by the GPhC. There have been no incidents or concerns reported to or by the GPhC during the reporting period.

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)

The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd. maintains an active registration with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) registration number Z8456837.

The Medicines Health Regulatory Agency (MHRA)

The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd. retains its active registration with the Medicines Health Regulatory Agency (MHRA), via Charles S Bullen Stomacare Ltd (MHRA reference number 4199).

Statutory and Mandatory Registrations and Training for Healthcare Professionals within the organisation

The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd. employs, contracts or sub-contracts pharmacists and nurses, who are required to ensure they have an active registration with their professional body.

The Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC)

Each of the nurses must ensure they uphold the NMC professional standards in order to remain registered to practise in the UK. The nurses must also ensure that, as part of this, they undertake their revalidation every three years and continually reflect upon their own practise and how they care for their patients.

All new starters have their registration status checked prior to commencing a role with the organisation. All the nursing staff are supported with clinical development, peer and managerial supervision, and with their revalidation to ensure they remain fit to practice and remain present on the NMC register.

During the reporting period The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd. supported two nurses to successfully undertake their independent Prescribing Courses and qualify as Non-Medical Prescribers (NMPs).

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC)

Each of the pharmacists (and pharmacy technicians) must ensure their registration remains active. This requires them to complete their annual revalidation in order that they keep their professional skills and knowledge up to date, reflect upon how to improve and demonstrate how they provide safe and effective care for patients and the public.

All the pharmacists (and pharmacy technicians) provide evidence, demonstrating they have completed their annual revalidation and they retain an active registration with the GPhC.

Mandatory Training

There are three mandatory training lists for staff working for The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd., the clinical mandatory training relates to the registered clinicians working within the organisation, the non-clinical patient contact is for all the non-clinical staff who have, or whom may have direct contact with patients and the non-clinical, non-patient contact I for staff whom will never have contact with patients (e.g. work in the warehouse processing goods).

In addition to the standard mandatory training lists, detailed below, there are additional training requirements that are specific to individual roles (e.g. fork-lift truck operators; Data Protection Officer; Director level requirements).

The Mandatory Training list is aligned with the NHS Health Education England Core Skills Training Framework (CSTF).

Non-clinical non-patient contact

| Course Name | Frequency | Code & Link |
|--|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Information Governance & Data security | Annual | <u>743-0008</u> |
| Equality, diversity and human rights | 3 years | <u>743-0002</u> |
| Fire safety | Assessment every 2 years | <u>743-0001</u> |
| Health, safety and welfare | 3 years | <u>743-0003</u> |
| Infection prevention and control level 1 | 3 years | <u>743-0005</u> |
| Resuscitation level 1 | Annual | <u>743-0004</u> |
| Safeguarding adults level 1 | 3 years | <u>743-0010</u> |
| Safeguarding children level 1 | 3 years | <u>743-0011</u> |
| Conflict Resolution | 3 years | <u>743-006</u> |
| Moving and Handling level 1 | Once | <u>743-0007</u> |

Clinical

| Course Name | Frequency | Code & Link |
|--|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Information Governance & Data security | Annual | <u>743-0008</u> |
| Equality, diversity and human rights | 3 years | <u>743-0002</u> |
| Fire safety | Assessment every 2 years | <u>743-0001</u> |
| Health, safety and welfare | 3 years | <u>743-0003</u> |
| Infection prevention and control level 1 | 3 years | <u>743-0005</u> |
| Preventing radicalisation – awareness of Prevent | 3 years | <u>743-0019</u> |
| Preventing radicalisation – basic Prevent awareness | 3 years | <u>743-0009</u> |
| Resuscitation level 1 | Annual | <u>743-0004</u> |
| Resuscitation adults level 2 | Annual | <u>743-0012</u> |
| Resuscitation newborn level 2 | Annual | <u>743-0014</u> |
| Resuscitation paediatric level 2 | Annual | <u>743-0013</u> |
| Safeguarding adults level 1 | 3 years | <u>743-0010</u> |
| Safeguarding adults level 2 | 3 years | <u>743-0017</u> |
| Safeguarding children level 1 | 3 years | <u>743-0011</u> |
| Safeguarding children level 2 | 3 years | <u>743-0018</u> |
| Conflict Resolution | 3 years | <u>743-006</u> |
| The Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism – Tier 1 | Once | <u>Oliver</u> |
| The Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism – Tier 2 | Once | Face to face |
| Moving and Handling level 1 | Once | <u>743-0007</u> |

Non-clinical patient contact

| Course Name | Frequency | Code & Link |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Information Governance & Data security | Annual | 743-0008 |
| Equality, diversity and human rights | 3 years | 743-0002 |
| Fire safety | Assessment every 2 years | 743-0001 |
| Health, safety and welfare | 3 years | 743-0003 |
| Infection prevention and control level 1 | 3 years | 743-0005 |
| Preventing radicalisation – awareness of Prevent | 3 years | 743-0019 |
| Preventing radicalisation – basic Prevent awareness | 3 years | 743-0009 |
| Resuscitation level 1 | Annual | 743-0004 |
| Safeguarding adults level 1 | 3 years | 743-0010 |
| Safeguarding adults level 2 | 3 years | 743-0017 |
| Safeguarding children level 1 | 3 years | 743-0011 |
| Safeguarding children level 2 | 3 years | 743-0018 |
| Conflict Resolution | 3 years | 743-006 |
| The Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism – Tier 1 | Once | Oliver |
| Moving and Handling level 1 | Once | 743-0007 |

Quality Performance Review 2024/25

Patient Safety

During the reporting period there were 7 incidents reported in total.

Of these, two were near misses related to dispensing errors and one was a serious incident that were related to potential non ICO-reportable data breaches.

Three incidents were safeguarding issues, in which members of the Bullen Healthcare Group raised safe guarding incidents due to concerns that were identified, by the staff, relating to the patients we care for, and the lack of support they were receiving from health and social care services.

The final incident was one that was raised by The Bullen Healthcare Group in response to a serious incident at a local acute Trust, where a patient had been lost to follow for a number of years. We identified this patient and have provided immediate and ongoing support.

There were no incidents in which patients came to harm as a result of the care being provided by The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd.

Clinical Effectiveness

Patients continued to access clinical reviews with relevant specialist nurses during the reporting period, some services restrict us to undertaking desktop reviews, whilst we have full clinical responsibility for others. On the 31st March 2025, there were 2,314 patients registered as part of BLMK SPS; 2,336 patients registered as part of LUAMS; 5,550 registered as part of the MARSS and 784 patients registered as part of NWAPS.

Many of the patients within our services have multiple reviews each year, in order to ensure they are obtaining the best outcomes, issues are addressed in an efficient manner enabling the patient better control and requiring fewer escalations.

During 2024-25, our services enhanced our review offers to offer bespoke cost optimisation work with several main aims:

- To promote, where clinically appropriate, the deprescribing of items no longer needed by patients or helping to address underlying issues, negating the need for some of the additional products that have continuously been prescribed.
- To increase the utilisation of high-quality products that are more cost efficient to the NHS.
- To increase the use of formulary products and obtain higher formulary adherence.

A review and analysis of the outcomes of the clinical interventions have demonstrated that the most common outcomes for patients fall into the following categories:

For patients with additional urology needs:

- Increased adherence to formulary prescribing.
- Reduced risk of localised injury.
- Reduced risk of hospital readmission.
- Increased compliance and understanding.

For patients with a stoma:

- Successful treatment of granulomas closer to home.
- Reduction in frequency poorly fitting stoma bags.
- Reduction in the incidence of sore skin.
- Reduction in the need for accessories.
- Increased patient knowledge and empowerment.

Cost optimisation and minimising waste

The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd. undertake a proactive stock check with almost all patients we process orders for and assist them to order appropriate quantities, ensuring they order sufficiently but not excessively to reduce the risk of stockpiling and waste.

For our centralised prescribing services (BLMK, LUAMS, MARSS and NWAPS) we ensure that we liaise with the patient, or authorised representative, directly. Prescription requests are not accepted from commercial third parties for the majority of patients, whilst our policies and processes ensure that patients are safeguarded against forgetting to request a prescription and potentially running out.

Several screening questions are also in place for our centralised services, which helps with early identification of when a patient may be becoming unstable or issues are starting to arise. This enables us to invite the patient to attend a review with a specialist nurse as early as possible in order to address their issues early. This does improve patients care and outcomes but is also a cost avoidance as patients do not attempt to use additional products to manage their issues on their own. Whilst it is recognised that self-care and patient education does have a role to play it is also important to address underlying issues patients may be experiencing.

BLMK SPS:

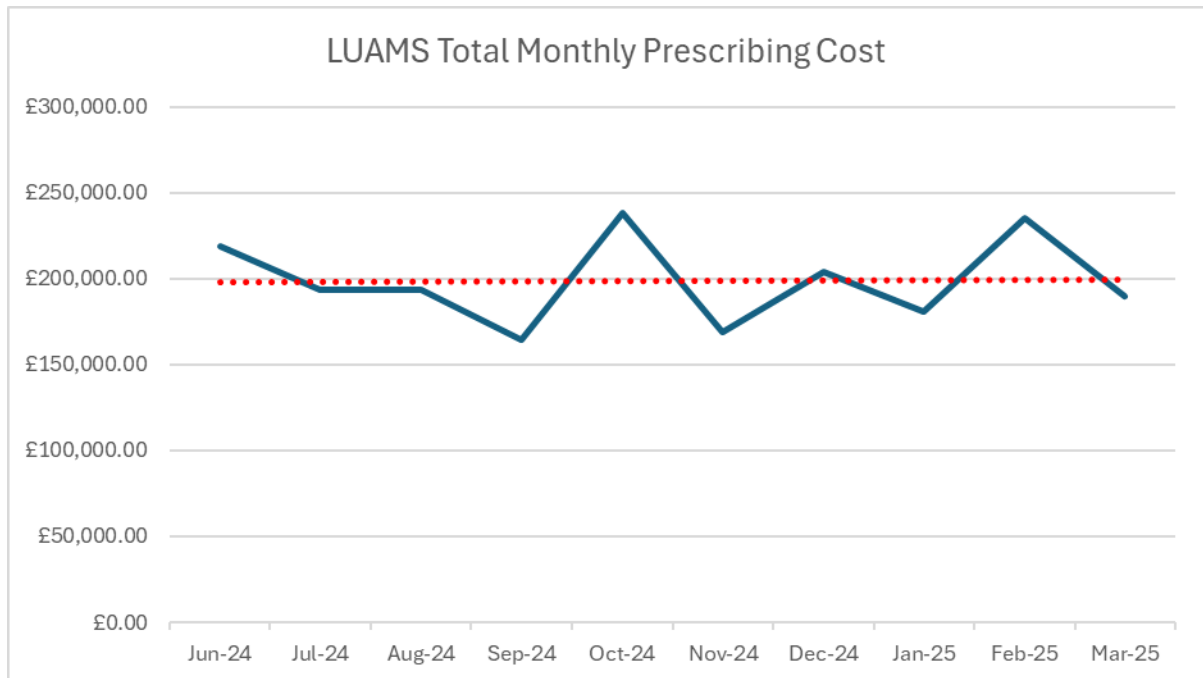
The service launched in July 2023 with the ICB tracking the number of items per patient and the cost per patient on a monthly basis using ePact data. At the time of authorising the latest ePact data available was to December 2024. What is clear is that the growth of items (3.17%) and cost growth (4.98%) was lower for BLMK ICB when compared to the national average item growth (6.83%) and cost growth (13.27%). Based on the population, BLMK ICB have calculated that this equates to a cost avoidance of £340,000 during the rolling prior 12 months, outlining how the service is limiting the growth.

| BNF Chapter | Total items last year | Total items this year | Actual growth items | % growth items | England % growth items | Expected growth in items at England rate | Actual growth items deviation from England |
|------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------|------------------------|--|--|
| Stoma Appliances | 79,537 | 82,061 | 2,524 | 3.17% | 6.83% | 5,436 | -2,912 |

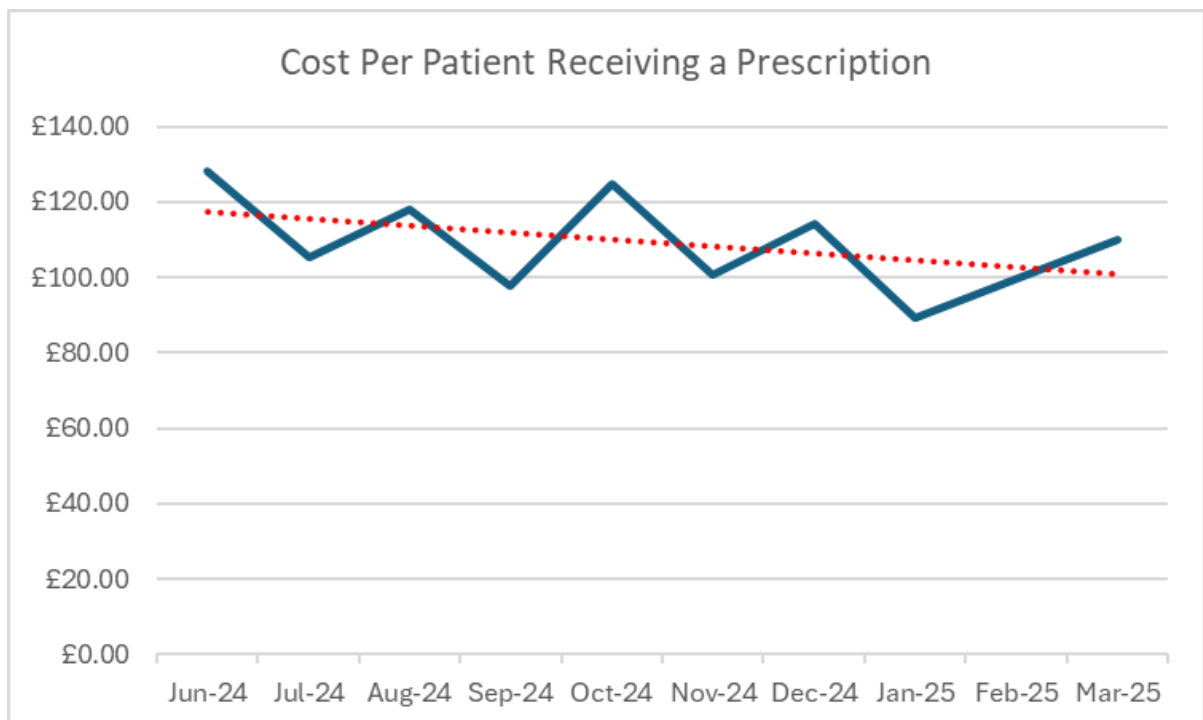
| BNF Chapter | Total cost last year | Total cost this year | Actual growth cost | % growth cost | England % growth cost | Expected growth in cost at England rate | Actual growth cost deviation from England |
|------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|---------------|-----------------------|---|---|
| Stoma Appliances | £4,104,213 | £4,308,604 | £204,391 | 4.98% | 13.27% | £544,792 | -£340,401 |

LUAMS:

As LUAMS is a long-standing contract the cost reduction available from waste is limited during the reporting period and falls into cost avoidance. The data shows that monthly costs have remained static:



When patient numbers (patients receiving a prescription) are overlayed, a small downward trend can be observed: per patient:



MARSS:

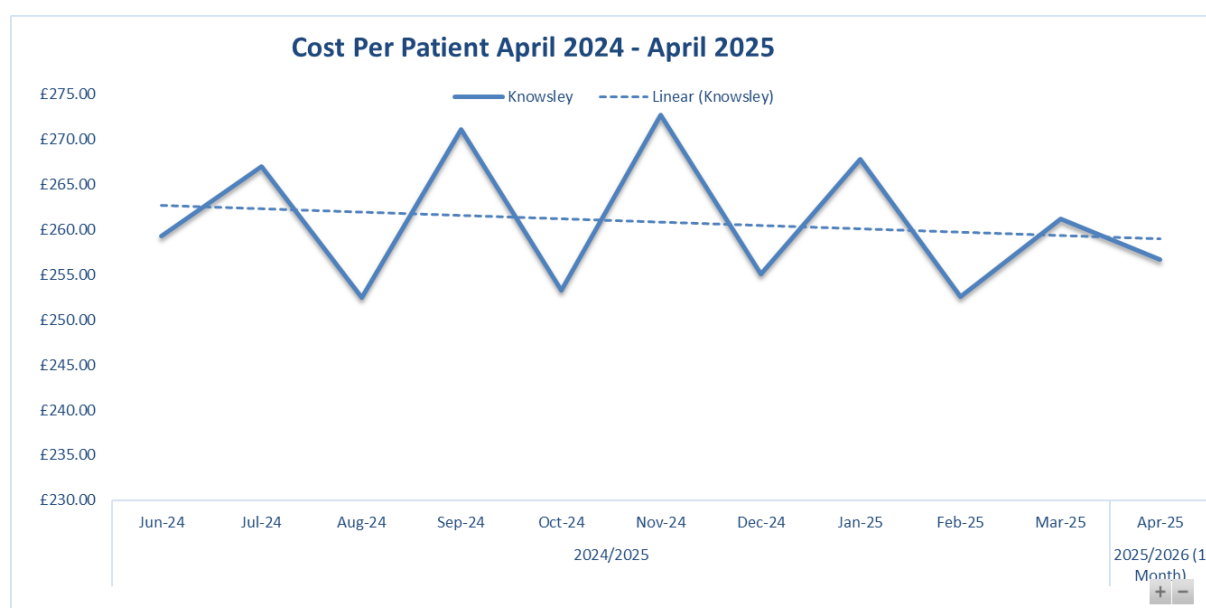
This service is well established but has continued to see an increase in the number of patients, with the number of new patients out performing the number of discharges. This has resulted in an overall increase in the overall prescribing costs.

During the reporting period we implement service level prescribing, which has allowed us to separate out the prescribing costs into the NHS places that are part of the service (NHS Halton Place; NHS Knowsley Place; NHS Liverpool Place; NHS St Helens Place; NHS Warrington Place; NHS Wirral Place). This provides commissioners with clear visibility of the prescribing costs for their patients.

What is quite clear is that, when we look at the average cost per patient, there are some significant variations in the average monthly prescribing cost between the different NHS places, based on the prior rolling 12 months of prescribing data. There is a 10.4% (n=£28.61) variance between average patients cost in the most expensive NHS place and the most cost-efficient NHS place.

The focus for the forthcoming year is to bring all the other NHS places within the service down and match the most cost efficient NHE place, equating to an estimated reduction of £656,000 per annum, before new patient growth. We are committed to working with the different NHS places to address this potential unwarranted variation, with one NHS Place equating to 53% (n=£347,000) of that potential cost reduction. We do envisage that good engagement with the local colorectal departments and local stoma teams will also be required to address these issues.

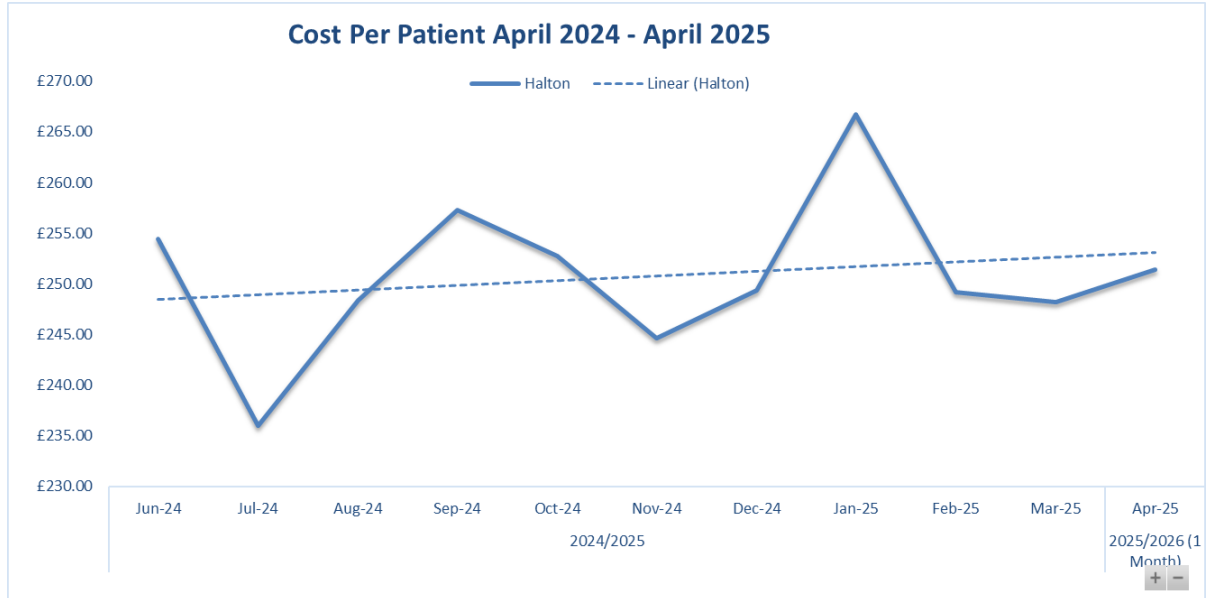
NHS Halton Place:



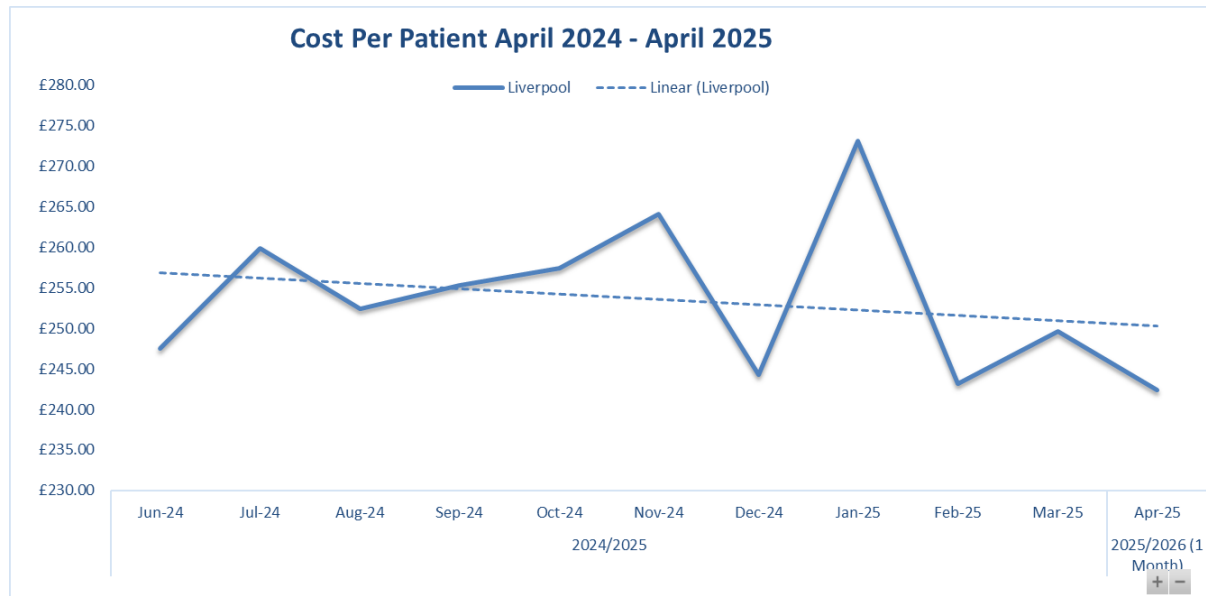


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NHS Knowsley Place:



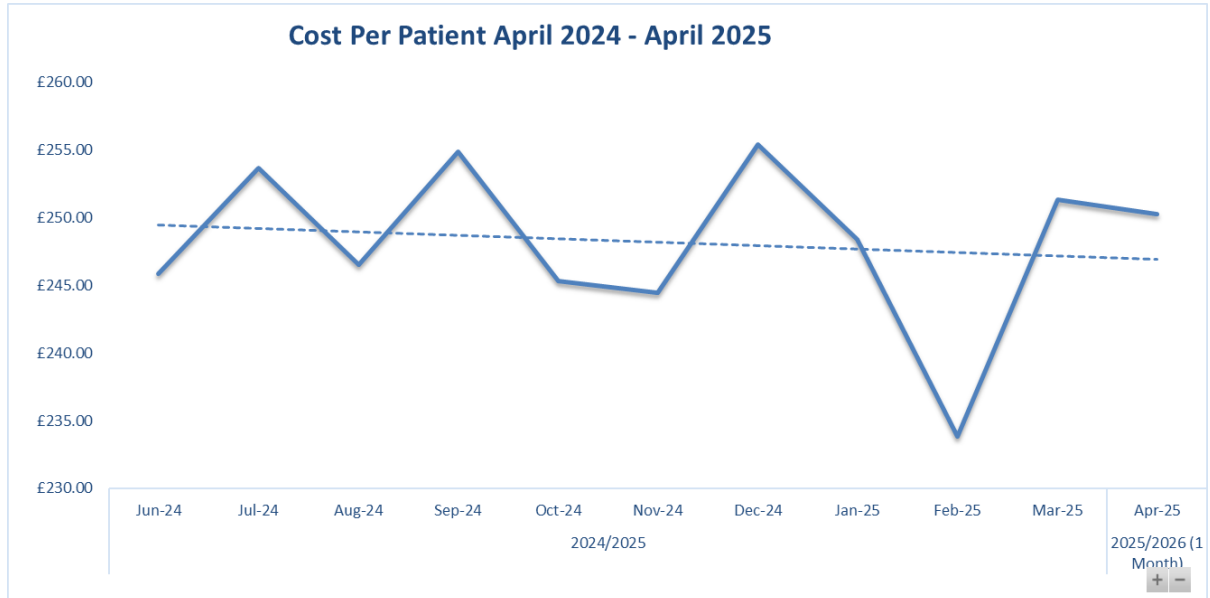
NHS Liverpool Place:



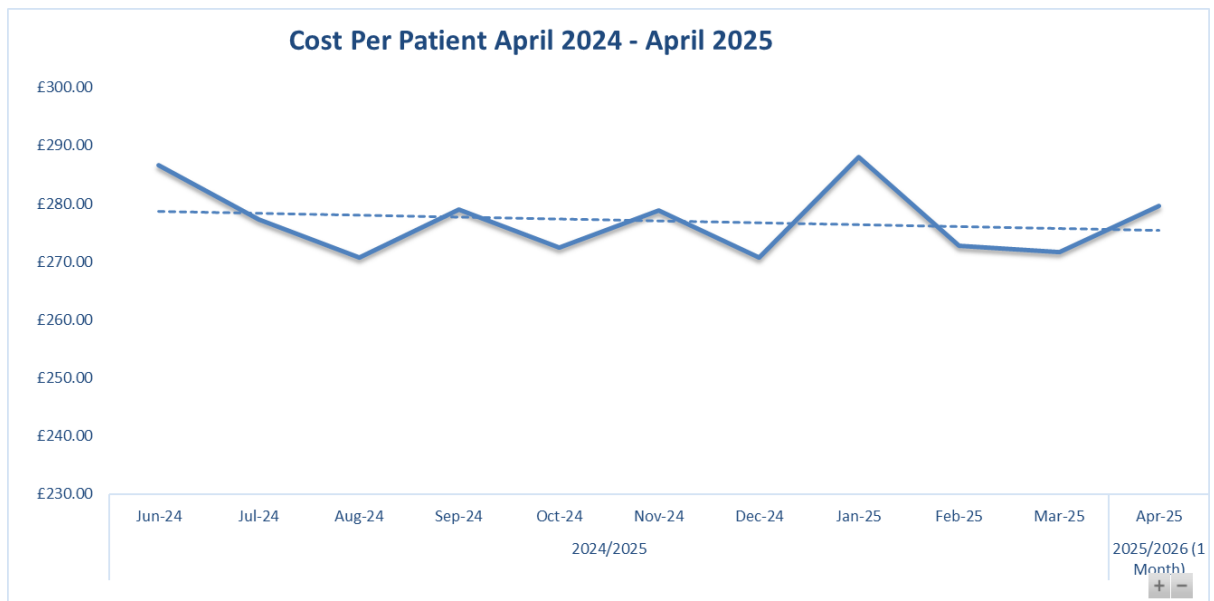


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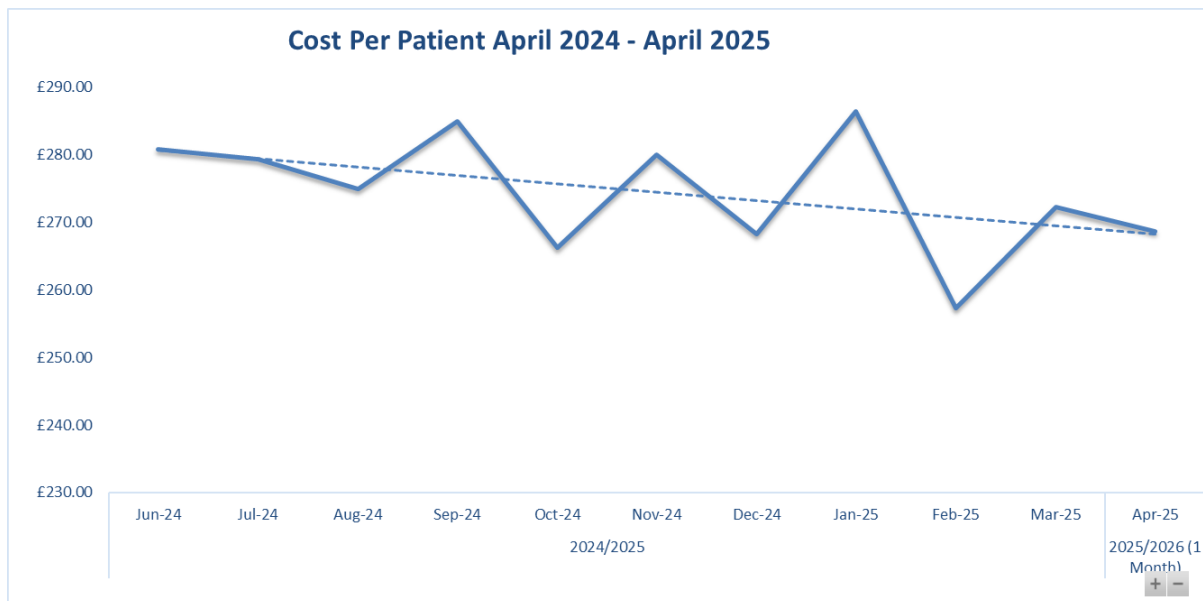
NHS St Helens Place:



NHS Warrington Place:



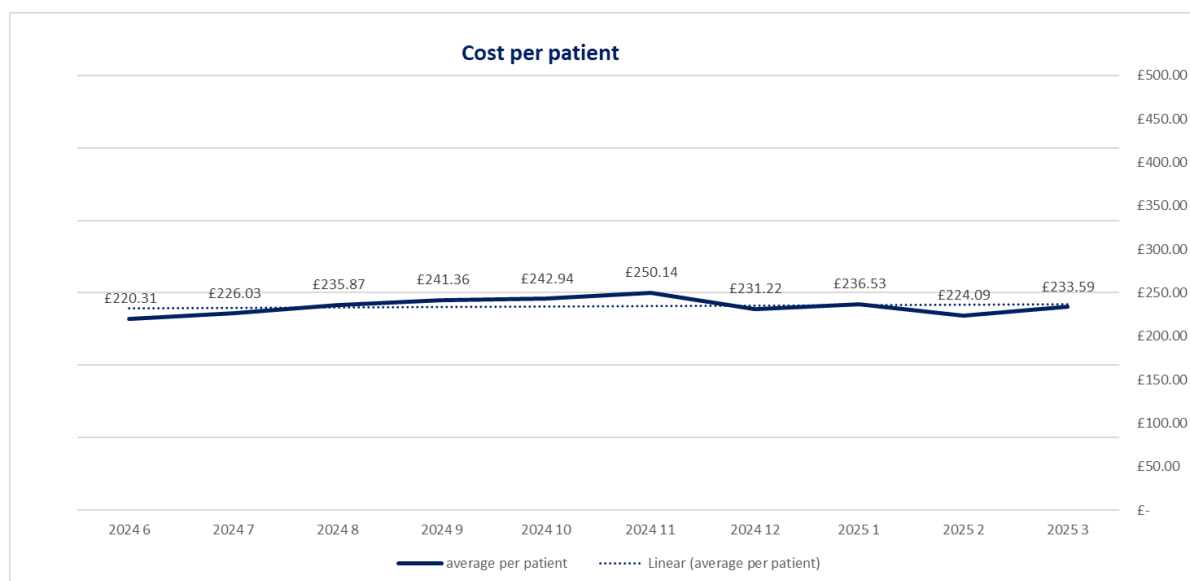
NHS Wirral Place:



NWAPS:

The Norfolk & Waveney service commenced in November 2023 and is only provided to a minimal number of practices (n=15). The commissioning of the service in this way has resulted in limited impact due to limited patient numbers and soe confusion for local Healthcare Providers.

As a result of only having a limited number of patients registered with the service, the national data creates an unclear picture of the impact within the ICB and it has also created difficulties with the delivery of impactful cost optimisation work, however we have been able to demonstrate a stabilisation of cost per patient.



Audit

Audit forms an integral element of assurance provision for The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd. The Board of Directors obtains assurance that it is delivering high quality healthcare to patients and the approved and authorised processes are being adhered to.

Audits are also utilised to assist in identifying any gaps in any policies, processes or systems and adherence, enabling actions to be undertaken and action plans to be developed if required.

| | The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd. | NHS Commissioned Services | Pharmore | Other |
|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------|----------|------------------|
| ISO 9001 | ✓ | | | |
| ISO 14001 | ✓ | | | |
| Financial accounts | ✓ | | | |
| Mandatory Training Compliance | ✓ | | | |
| Call Quality Monitoring | ✓ | ✓ | | Charity partners |
| Professional Registration compliance | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Policy adherence | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| NPSA & CAS alert compliance audit | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Safeguarding audit | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Prescribing audit Formulary compliance | | ✓ | | |
| Prescribing audit P-formulary compliance | | ✓ | | |
| Medical Records Quality audit | | ✓ | | |
| KPI achievement audit | ✓ | ✓ | | Charity partners |
| Pharmacy Quality Scheme audits (various) | | | ✓ | |
| Clinical Governance Audit | | ✓ | | |
| Incident Audit | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Adherence to Complaints policy | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Equality and Modern-Day Slavery Audit | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| NHS Accessible Information Standard | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Conflict of Interest Audit | ✓ | ✓ | | |



Bullen.

Compliments from patients and carers

You could not improve the service any better for me. I am very happy for what you all do for me - Thank you very much

Call handlers when placing orders are superb. Very well-mannered and efficient. The men and women who deliver. The products are wonderful, always on time and pleasant people.

Staff are extremely helpful and always go out of their way to make sure I have sufficient stoma products. Always friendly.

Great customer service and support as always, just keep up with the excellent service that you guys are giving thank you

All aspects, the staff are brilliant. Big thank you to all of them

Nothing is too much for the staff, I have on occasion been needing extra supplies and have been able to access them, they refer me to the stoma nurse if I'm having any stoma problems. Very good efficient service. Never been let down with anything.

The people are very pleasant and helpful which makes it so much easier and takes pressure and worry off and makes it so much better for the individual.

Getting monthly reminders by phone call to do a stock check and order my urology products. All the staff are friendly, knowledgeable and helpful. Products are delivered on time.

The fact that if I ever have a problem there is always somebody to contact who can advise me and help with my problem but also understands and points me in the direction, if necessary, with regards to products and services.

The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd.
Glacier Buildings, Brunswick Business Park, Harrington Rd, Liverpool L3 4BH

Review and Learning

The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd. regularly review and refine systems and processes for services delivered to ensure high quality and efficient services that meet the needs of our patients are delivered. Engagement with patients, carers and associated healthcare professionals has enabled, and continues to enable, the continual refinement of our services to provide patients with a system that is easy and convenient to navigate.



Complaints

For all the services we provide, there is a complaints and compliments policy outlining the processes undertaken to ensure all complaints are investigated, a Route Cause Analysis is undertaken, where applicable, and there is the opportunity for shared learning.

We have made changes to our services, and we continually review them to improve the efficiency, patients experiences and their satisfaction.

We now ensure during the welcome call that:

- Patients are made aware of what happened historically and how much impact these services have on GP practices.
- Patients are informed that a stock check will be required and triage questions will need to be answered any time they wish to request more items and the reasons for this.

We also have ensured that our communications are explicitly clear that services are the correct name and they are 'run by Bullen' to ensure there is no confusion that patients have 'moved across to Bullen'. This is vitally important step as it ensures patients are aware they are part of an NHS commissioned service and patient confusion was driving complaints from Healthcare Professionals about dispenser changes, which were incorrect (patients conveying they're now part of the 'Bullen service' i.e. the prescribing service). Resulting in hours of wasted time addressing complaints that were invalid.

Projects – Cost Optimisation Reviews

The cost optimisation processes commenced in 2023-24 were continued and deployed more widely during 2024-25.

The focus of these looked at four main categories:

1. Accessory Items

Review of these products and switching to more cost-efficient ones with generic fittings enabled a reduction in the prescribing costs without any impact on the patient.

2. Intermittent Self Catheterisation (ISC)

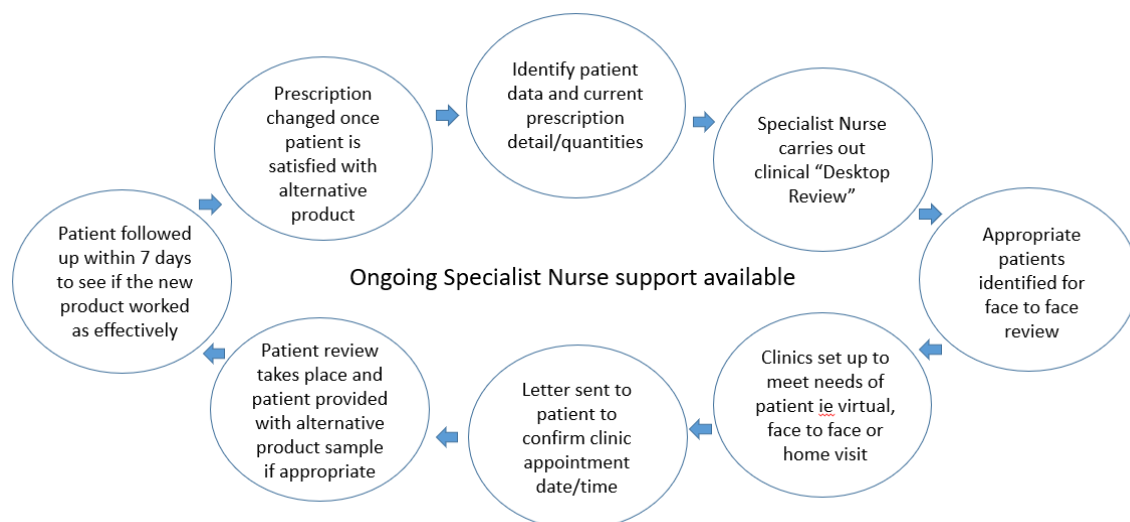
A patient clinical review was undertaken with the patient and, providing clinically appropriate and patient agreed, alternative items were supplied to the patient to trial before any changes were made. This allowed for us to safely transfer a percentage of patients across (30% – 40%) to more cost-efficient alternatives, whilst ensuring high outcomes and not negatively impacting patients.

3. Stoma Bags

A patient clinical review was undertaken with the patient and, providing clinically appropriate and patient agreed, alternative items were supplied to the patient to trial before any changes were made. This allowed for us to safely transfer a percentage of patients across (25% - 30%) to more cost-efficient alternatives, whilst ensuring high outcomes and not negatively impacting patients.

4. Deprescribing

Patients prescribed items, usually accessory items, that were being used to address underlying issues were able to have these items deprescribed once their underlying issues were addressed. This led to a reduction in the number of items, and associated cost, required every month.



Review of Performance and Progress against the Priorities for 24-25

The following priorities were identified for development and enhancement during 2024-25. Progress against these have been monitored on a quarterly basis. Some areas have been successfully progressed and completed, others are being considered for continuation during 2025-26, whilst others have been identified as incomplete but are no longer a priority or can be completed by the Group.

The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd.

Digital Foundations

An ambitious aim for 2024-25 was the introduction of two mobile applications, one for patients who are part of a centralised service run by Bullen and one for patients that Bullen dispense for and are not part of the centralised services. We are pleased to report that the mobile phone application for our centralised services, BullenRx, was launched and is now available on the Apple App Store and Google play store. However, the development of the other mobile phone application has been delayed but will continue into 2025-26.

The plan to move our PMR system across to the new one is still awaiting the required accreditations from NHSE and thus we were unable to complete this during the reporting period. It does, however, form a part of our plan for the forthcoming year or as soon as NHSE have provided the required accreditations.

Carbon Reduction Plan Review & Update

There was an increase in governance during 2024-25 with respect to Corporate Responsibility & Sustainability (CR&S) with an increased focus placed on Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG). With respect to our Carbon Reduction Plan (CRP) we have revisited our net-zero target and reduced to 2040 in line with the NHS Green plan.

We will continue to work and progress on our Carbon Reduction strategies and associated risk with a large focus on our Scope 3 emissions during the forthcoming years.

Clinical Services

We continued to offer our clinical services during 2024-25 and delivered prescribing cost savings to the NHS. All patients registered more than 12 months, within our existing prescribing services were provided the opportunity for a review with a specialist clinician. We also provided review services to 18 different GP practices across the country who wished to have their patients reviewed by a specialist stoma/urology nurse.

Clinical Governance Arrangements

The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd. ensures delivery of their clinical governance through a series of protocols, policies and assurance meetings. The clinical governance arrangements ensures that The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd. is accountable for continually improving the quality of our services and creating the opportunity for excellence in clinical care.

The processes in place ensures the quick and efficient escalation of concerns within the organisation and the opportunity to involve other organisations involved in the care of specific patients.

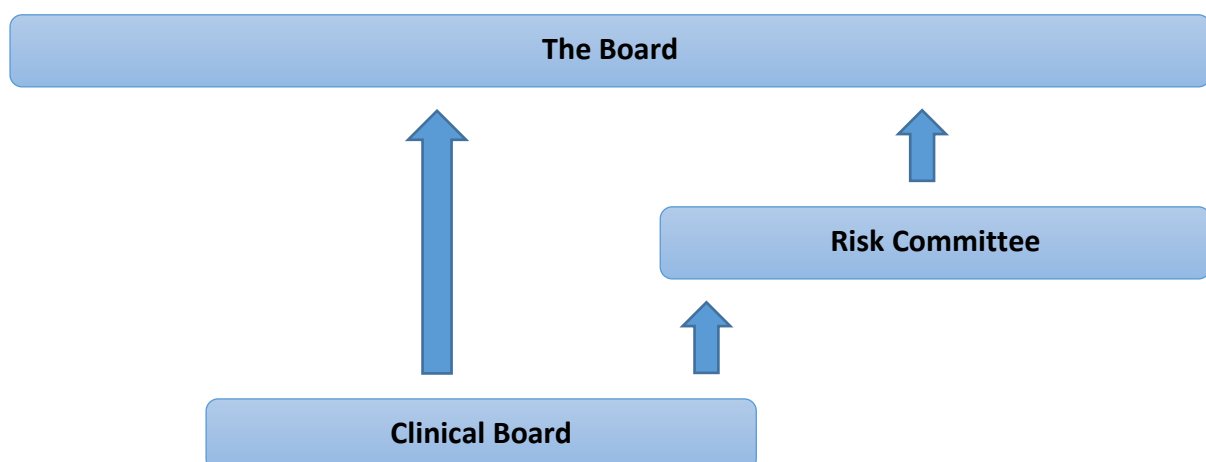
The following areas contribute to the clinical governance arrangements for The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd.

Risk Management

The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd. has multiple risk registers for different arms of the organisation that are monitored by the Risk Committee with escalation to the Board. Each of the identified risks are categorised and graded with mitigating actions outlined in order to attempt to reduce any risks to a level that is accepted.

Any risks that are higher than the committee are happy to accept or those where the organisation has an appetite to reduce have an action plan developed, implemented and monitored to ensure risk reduction.

Clinical risks, and those related to our clinical services, are managed by the Clinical Board with delegated authority from the Risk Committee. The Clinical Board is able to escalate concerns / issues either to the Risk Committee for review or direct to the Board for more urgent issues, providing flexibility whilst enabling efficient reporting and mitigating actions to be taken without delay.

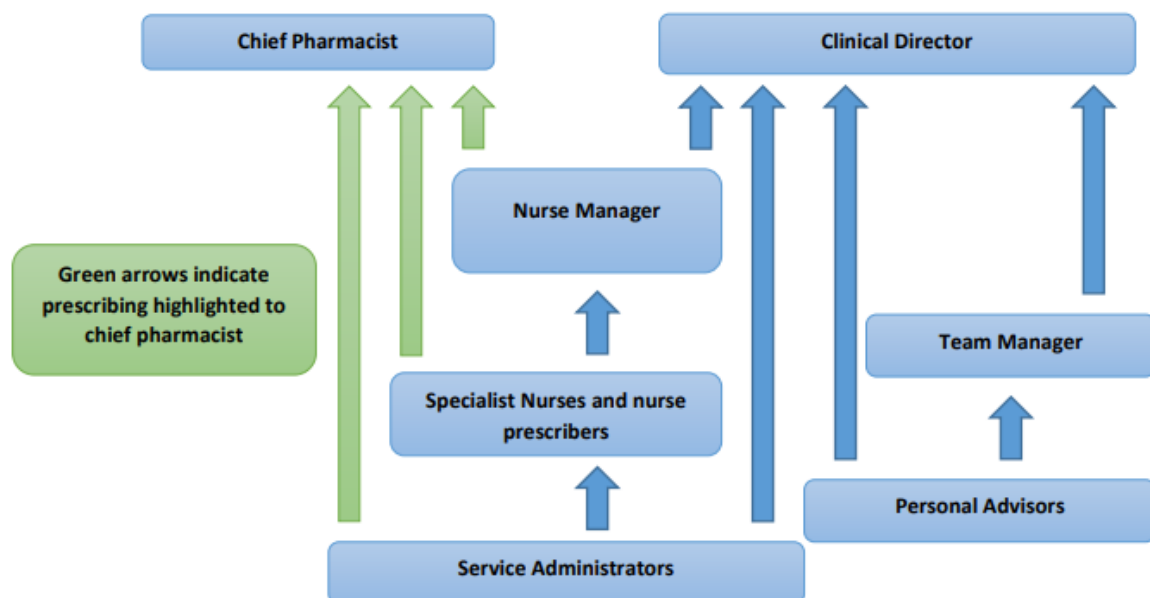


Safeguarding

All the staff within the organisation have safeguarding level 1 training, clinicians trained to level 3 and the safeguarding leads trained to level 4. All concerns are escalated to the safeguarding leads who then escalate accordingly.

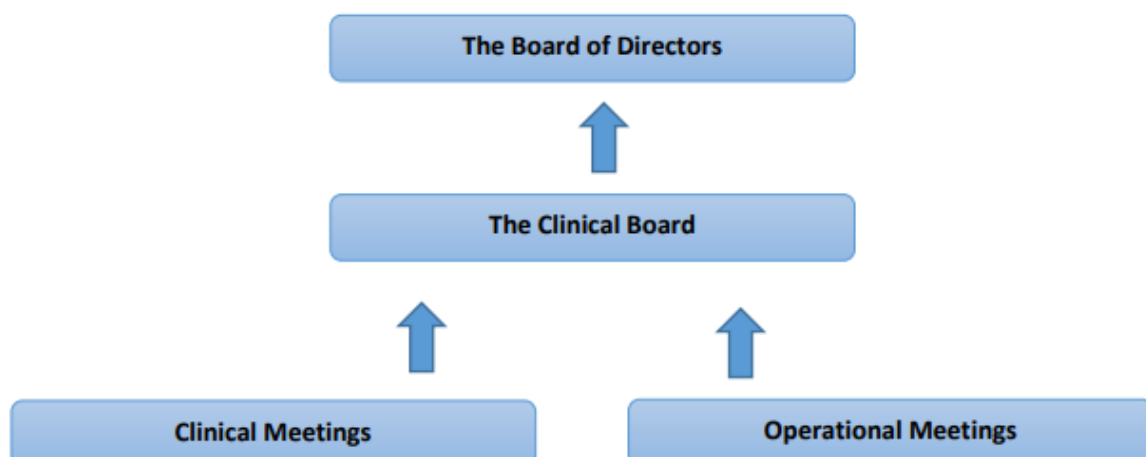
Regular safeguarding audits are undertaken and routine engagement with staff to remind them to raise concerns. Support is also provided to staff if/when they have been involved in a raising a safeguarding concern.

Escalation



Escalation of issues will be to line managers in the first instance. However, when line managers are unavailable and the escalation cannot wait until they are available further escalation should take place as outlined above.

Board Assurance Framework



Priorities for 2025-2026

The following areas have been identified as a priority for work and development during 2025-26. It is anticipated that these developments will ensure the standard of service we deliver to our patients will remain high and we will continue to successfully support a continual increase in patients. The priorities for 2025-26 were also developed based on actual performance during 2024-25 against the desired performance.

The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd.

Digital Foundations

The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd will continue to progress with their Digital Roadmap to ensure services provided keep in-line with the NHS's "Digital First" strategy. The plans include:

1. The development and launch of our bespoke patient mobile phone application to allow patients, not under one of our prescribing services, to order their appliances direct from their GP practice and inform us, as their chosen dispenser, of this request being initiated. It will provide patients with control and the integrated status updates will allow patients visibility to monitor progress of their requests.
2. Post-accreditation being obtained, a new PMR will be introduced into the organisation, which will bring efficiency, increase accuracy, reduce risk of errors and have a positive impact on our Carbon Reduction plans.
3. A new telephony platform will be introduced with smart technology to allow patients to route to the team that can best help them first time. Additional options, such as automated request updates, will allow patients more visibility and access to information without the need to speak with a call handler.
4. Secure online referral will make the referral process for healthcare professionals and patients who self-refer, faster and more secure. Reducing the need or reliance on telephone calls or the completion of emails.
5. Semi-automatic registration of patients will increase the efficiency of our registration process enabling us to register new patients more efficiently, allowing us to mobilise new prescribing services faster for commissioners.

Review and update of our Carbon Reduction Plan

Having reviewed our Carbon Reduction Plan during 2024-25 it is clear that more ambitious targets are required to be focussed on for delivery to achieve our ambitious target of net-zero before 2040. Our Carbon Reduction Plan will continue to be developed, and additional work will be undertaken to support the organisation in taking steps to reach this target.

A key impact on the organisation is our scope three emissions, which are significant due to the type of products that are supplied (high use of single use plastics). However, regulatory requirements and legislative pressures are starting to influence manufacturers to invest in low carbon alternatives. With the expansion of our centralised prescribing services, this provides us with an opportunity to work with responsible manufacturers in order to increase the use low Carbon options.

New Clinical Services

The intention is to increase the number of patients that are currently being cared for by one of our centralised prescribing services. We already care for over 11,000 patients and have the aim to increase this to more than 25,000 patients by the end of 2025/26.

If we can achieve these targets, it will enable us to reach our aims of helping more patients obtain access to the most appropriate clinicians for their conditions, continue to reduce unwarranted prescribing variation and will have a direct impact on our Carbon emissions.

BLMK SPS

It is our intention to work with commissioners to convert this service to a full bladder and bowel service and commence undertaking the prescribing for patients who require urology items. In doing this it will further increase capacity within GP practices within BLMK ICB and allow the ICB to also realise cost efficiencies related to a reduction of waste within the system during 2025-26.

To further enhance the service, we are intending on launching BullenRx to BLMK Stoma patients as the first area for wider roll out. This will empower patients more, allow them more responsibility for requesting their supplies and we anticipate it will result in further cost savings being made for the ICB.

LUAMS

During 2025-26 it is our intention to transfer LUAMS across to electronic prescribing systems (EPS) in-keeping with best practice and our digital transformation strategies. This will allow dispensers to receive prescriptions more efficiently, will reduce the need to have prescribers on site and provide better audit trails for prescription monitoring.

MARSS

During 2025-26, the service will continue to provide the same high-quality care that it has always done. We intend to roll the BullenRx app out to patients within this service, as the second area which will empower patients more, allow them more responsibility for requesting their supplies and we anticipate it will result in further cost savings being made for the ICB.

Although we've delivered good results during this contract there are still obvious unwarranted variations in prescribing that can be seen across the ICB. Much of this is likely due to the varying contracts (sponsorship) local acute Trusts have with varying Stoma Appliance Manufacturers. The prescribing data shows a clear link between the utilisation of products from a Stoma Appliance Manufacturer where there is a contract in place with an acute Trust. This results in a disproportionate usage of the sponsoring companies' products for patients within these areas, which tend to be the more expensive items, thus creating a higher longer term cost impact on the NHS.

It is our intention to continue to work with the ICB to address this unwarranted variation in prescribing and prescribing costs and assisting the ICB to:

- a) Understand the overall impact of sponsorship
- b) Assist with the identification of products that could be utilised to address this unwarranted variation

NWAPS

It is our intention to work with the ICB to help them decide to extend the pilot to all practices across the ICB. In doing so, we believe that there will be some significant benefits that will be seen and it will also result in the elimination of some local issues that are a direct result of the previous commissioning decisions.

An ICB roll out will:

- Provide clarity to local Health Care Professionals for which patients are part of the service and who should be referred to the service. This reduces the risk of inappropriate referrals and also reduces the risk of patients falling through the net.
- Allow correct monitoring of the prescribing data and allow the service to address the unwarranted variation at scale, tackling the issues for the whole of the ICB opposed to the current 10-15%.



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The Bullen Healthcare Group Ltd. is registered and regulated by the Care Quality Commission, The Medicines Health Regulatory Agency, NHS England and NHS Improvement and the General Pharmaceutical Council.

June 2025

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