

# Governors briefing



25 July 2025

Dear Colleagues

## 1. Outcome of criminal trial

The criminal trial following the violent death of baby Brendon Staddon while he was a patient on the Special Care Baby Unit at Yeovil District Hospital in the early hours of 5 March 2024 concluded yesterday.

His father Daniel Gunter was found guilty of murder and his mother Sophie Staddon was found not guilty of causing or allowing the death of a child. Avon and Somerset Police's statement following the conclusion of the trial is [here](#). In her interview, Senior Investigating Officer Detective Chief Inspector Nadine Partridge, from the Major Crime Investigation Team, praises our colleagues for their efforts to save baby Brendon.

Our statement following the conclusion of the trial is below.

*"This has been an incredibly distressing criminal case about the murder of a vulnerable two-week-old baby.*

*"For the past three and a half weeks the jury has heard evidence, including from expert witnesses, about the horrific injuries that were inflicted on baby Brendon Staddon while he was an inpatient in the Special Care Baby Unit at Yeovil District Hospital. Our thoughts are with his wider family.*

*"Our colleagues gave evidence about their interactions with Daniel Gunter and Sophie Staddon, their care for baby Brendon, and the actions they took to try and save his life in the early hours of 5 March 2024.*

*"We are part of the Child Safeguarding Practice Review, along with other agencies, that the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership has commissioned to examine the circumstances around Brendon's death.*

*"This is a process conducted when a child dies or is seriously harmed due to abuse or neglect. The primary goal is to identify areas for improvement in how professionals and organisations work together to protect children and prevent similar incidents from happening again.*

*"This process is well underway and is due to be completed in the autumn."*

A number of our colleagues gave evidence during this incredibly distressing trial. The service group has written to them to offer support and additionally signpost them to our Colleague Support Service.

## **2. Industrial action by resident doctors**

Resident doctors (formerly junior doctors) are taking strike action from 7am today (Friday 25 July) until 7am on Wednesday 30 July.

BMA resident doctors are currently in dispute with the government over pay and conditions and have a current mandate to take industrial action. This mandate runs until January 2026.

During these strikes, all other NHS staff (including consultants and other specialist doctors) will be working to ensure that safe staffing for emergency care continues to be available and that as many services as possible continue to operate safely.

As with last year's strike action, the trust is neutral on this strike action although we fully recognise and support the right of resident doctors to take industrial action. Also, as with previous industrial action taken last year, our overriding objective is to put in place cover arrangements by senior doctors that will ensure safe service provision throughout the period of the strike whilst maintaining as much planned/elective activity as possible throughout this period. All trusts have been asked to focus on maintaining as much planned care as possible this year in recognition that cancelling elective care can also have safety implications for patients.

### ***Planning***

Work by the senior medical leadership team to plan for the industrial action commenced internally in the trust within 48 hours of the BMA announcing strike action. The coordination of this work is being led by the Chief Medical Officer and her team with close support from operational services and all of the individual service groups.

Over the last two weeks planning meetings have been held daily with the participation of all of the service groups. Additional meetings having been arranged for today (Friday 25 July) ahead of the weekend. Over the weekend itself our normal on call cycle of daily Teams meeting will be used to monitor cover arrangements and additional calls will be introduced if necessary.

### ***Impact***

Our cover for the strike period appears to be comprehensive and resilient. This morning, on the first day of the strike, all clinical/operational areas appeared to be functioning well with no serious gaps or problems reported across the service groups.

The level of support for the strike amongst our group of 78 resident doctors is yet to be confirmed. Due to limited obligations on communication from our resident doctors, a manual headcount is being undertaken. With some resident doctors due to come on shift later in the day, the full extent of local levels of support for the strike is unlikely to be clear until the strike has been underway for 24 hours.

Early indications from the surgical directorate suggests that we may have to cancel approximately 50% of our planned surgical activity and 10% of booked outpatient

appointments. This picture is still evolving but we also expect the impact at all trusts to be published following the end of strike period.

### **Advice for patients**

Regardless of any strike action, it is really important that patients who need urgent medical care continue to come forward as normal, especially in emergency and serious life-threatening cases - when someone is seriously ill or injured, or their life is at risk. We have provided advice on our [website](#) and on social media about how to use services appropriately during this time and to continue to come as planned for their appointments unless they hear directly from us.

### **3. Major £17.8m expansion to NHS diagnostic services in Bridgwater**

Our trust has been given approval by NHS England to construct a new diagnostic centre next to Bridgwater Community Hospital.

The new £17.8 million state-of-the-art centre will provide a range of specialist diagnostic and outpatient services to the population of Bridgwater and the surrounding areas. Running seven days a week, it is expected to provide almost 25,000 additional scans every year.

It will improve access to scans and help to reduce our waiting lists for diagnostic tests and is a clear example of shifting services appropriately from an acute hospital into a community setting.

We were one of the first trusts to open a community diagnostic centre when we opened the Taunton Diagnostic Centre in September 2021. In addition, the Yeovil Diagnostic Centre will open later this year.

The diagnostic centre in Bridgwater will have two CT scanners, two MRI scanners, four outpatient rooms and two echocardiography / ultrasound rooms. It will provide the local population with routine and specialist cardiac and cancer scanning, alongside clinics.

This month we applied for planning permission for the new centre, and if approved, the new facility is likely to open in Summer 2026.

While the centre is in development, we aim to provide temporary MRI and CT scanners at Bridgwater Community Hospital, giving local people access to specialist scanning at the earliest opportunity, and supporting the NHS' plan to move more care into local neighbourhoods.

### **4. Stroke stakeholder briefing**

The latest stakeholder briefing on the reconfiguration of stroke services in Somerset is attached. This stakeholder update is jointly produced by NHS Somerset Integrated Care Board, our trust and Dorset County Hospital (DCH) NHS Foundation Trust to support the implementation phase of work to reconfigure and improve stroke services in Somerset.

### **5. Stay up to date what is happening within the trust and what communications colleagues are receiving with this week's [Our News](#).**

Highlights from this week include:

- [Improvements lead to huge reductions in waiting times for podiatry](#)
- [Analogue to digital – how we are supporting the shift](#)
- [Six Somerset cardiac scientists recognised at national awards](#)
- [Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board: Review recommends national change](#)
- [How Grace advocates for her clients with learning disabilities](#)
- [Colleagues join together to support patients with Functional Neurological Disorder](#)
- [Sameh's reflections on working as a nurse in Musgrove](#)
- [Hospital dementia garden rated 'Outstanding' by Yeovil in Bloom judges](#)

## 6. In the news this week

***Baby death at Yeovil Hospital's special care baby unit***- Widespread national and regional coverage about the conviction of Daniel Gunter for the murder of baby Brendon Staddon at Yeovil Hospital. The statement the trust issued is further up in the briefing.

Here is a selection of the most prominent coverage:

- Daily Telegraph: [Court hears social services 'failed to save baby murdered by father in special care unit'](#)
- [Questions remain unanswered over murder of premature... | Daily Mail Online](#)
- [Questions remain unanswered over murder of premature baby, say family | Chard & Ilminster News](#)
- [Questions remain unanswered over murder of premature baby, say family | The Independent](#)
- [Daniel Gunter guilty of murdering his two-week-old baby son in hospital | UK News | Sky News](#)
- [Dad guilty of murdering his two-week-old baby son at Yeovil District Hospital - Somerset Live](#)
- [Father guilty of murdering premature baby in Yeovil hospital - BBC News](#)
- [Yeovil father guilty of murdering 2-week-old son in special care baby unit | ITV News West Country](#)

**Somerset getting new 'state of the art' health scanning centre** - Following a press release we sent out, there was coverage about how a £17.8 million "state-of-the-art" diagnostic centre is to be built next to Bridgwater Community Hospital. The new facility will provide a range of specialist diagnostic and outpatient services. The Healthcare Management article is [here](#), Somerset Live [here](#), Bridgwater Mercury [here](#) and Somerset Leveller [here](#). We have also been approached by BBC Radio Somerset and we're looking to stand up an interviewee in the coming days.

**Industrial action** - Coverage about how the NHS in the South West is facing another significant round of industrial action by resident doctors. The West Somerset Free Press article is [here](#).

**Gastric bypass surgery is best obesity treatment** - Following a press release we sent out, there was coverage about how research from the University of Bristol, supported by the National Institute for Health and Care Research and Somerset FT, has confirmed that gastric bypass surgery is the most clinically and cost-effective treatment for people living with severe obesity. The Health Business article is [here](#) and Apple FM [here](#).

**Sepsis patients in Somerset are helping pave the way for future care -**

Following a press release we sent out, there was further coverage about those who need treatment in critical care units at Musgrove Park and Yeovil Hospitals are contributing to a national sepsis study, called SHORTER, being run by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). The Somerset Live article is [here](#).

**Several Somerset community hospitals could lose beds under proposed changes** - Coverage about how beds at Somerset's community hospitals could be closed or relocated under planned changes to treat more people closer to home. We issued a statement on this story. The Somerset Live article is [here](#), Somerset County Gazette [here](#), and Wells Nub News is [here](#).

**MP raises concerns over proposed merger of Burnham and Highbridge**

**medical centres** - Burnham-On-Sea's MP Ashley Fox has expressed concern over the proposed merger of Burnham & Berrow Medical Centre and Highbridge Medical Centre. The Burnham-on-Sea Online article is [here](#).

**Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board published its report** - Coverage about how a raft of recommendations has been made following the death of a Somerset woman who suffered domestic abuse. They appear in a report published this week by Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board. The Somerset County Gazette article is [here](#).

**Taunton roads around Musgrove to close as works start** - Coverage about how engineering work considered 'vital' is set to start in August to improve power supplies to Musgrove Park Hospital - and is expected to last four months. We included a quote in the National Grid press release. The Somerset County Gazette article is [here](#), Somerset Live [here](#), and Burnham-on-Sea Online [here](#).

**Wheddon Cross bus crash** - Coverage about the tragic Wheddon Cross bus crash one week on. The BBC Radio Somerset coverage includes an interview by Hannah Coleman, our service lead for community urgent care. The interview is [here](#) (1.19:00 into programme). The BBC News Online article is [here](#) and Somerset Live [here](#).

**7. Communication forward view for week beginning 28 July 2025****Announcement of new diagnostic centre next to Bridgwater Community**

**Hospital** – NHS England has given the green light for the £17.8 million project, which will increase capacity by 25,000 additional scans each year, significantly improving access to vital cardiac and cancer diagnostics, reducing waiting times, and bringing care closer to the community.

Has been shared across: Facebook, LinkedIn, and Somerset FT website (Wednesday 23 July) and will be in Our News week beginning 28 July.

**Royal Society of Radiographers visit to Musgrove Park and Yeovil hospitals –**

Katie Thompson, the new president of the Society of Radiographers visited our two acute hospitals this week (Mon 21 July), where she met radiology colleagues and was given a tour of both departments.

Will be shared across: LinkedIn on Friday 25 July, and in our internal Our News bulletin.

**Spotlight on our individual commissioned complex care service** – this service commissions individual placements in the community, or in hospital, for patients under the care of our mental health services who have the most complex needs. The

spotlight covers which key areas are covered by the service, and how they're making a difference for patients across the county and beyond.

Will be shared across: Facebook

**Paediatric audiology team get positive feedback from inspectors** – our team of audiologists who provide care to children and young people at Musgrove Park Hospital recently hosted three experts as part of the National Paediatric Hearing Services Improvement programme, which aims to check the quality and safety of audiology service across the country. The specialists gave positive feedback to the team around the care they provide.

Will be shared across: Press release to be sent to relevant local media next week, and posted on LinkedIn

**Colleague spotlight: More to Myron** - how Myron Osio, our emergency department manager at Yeovil Hospital, has two passions in life – nursing and music. We hear about his decision to move to the UK, his career so far, and how he pursues both passions.

Will be shared across: Internal Our News bulletin, Facebook and Instagram

**Our Somerset Colleague Awards 2025 winner profile on Dan Williams** – Dan won the Non-Clinical Colleague of the Year Award for his work on reducing off-framework agency use and meet regional spending caps, achieving over 90% compliance and cutting non-medical emergency spend by more than £1million.

Will be shared across: Internal Our News bulletin and LinkedIn

**Open Mental Health Summer toolkit** – working collaboratively with our partners at Open Mental Health to share their summer toolkit, including guidance on where to go for mental health support in Somerset.

Will be shared across: Internal Our News bulletin and Instagram (signposting on stories).

## **8. Briefings, analysis, opinion and events**

Below is a round-up of recent briefings, analysis, opinion pieces and upcoming events.

### ***NHS Providers***

**Blog:** [Values to action: Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion in a changing NHS](#) - NHS Providers chief executive Daniel Elkeles explains why now more than ever, we must continue to treat inclusion as a strategic investment, not a compliance exercise.

**Survey findings:** [NHS Providers survey findings on the threat of industrial action](#)

### ***NHS Confederation***

**Podcast:** [Mental health and the Ten-Year Health Plan: delivering on its bold ambitions](#) - In this episode, Matthew Taylor is joined by Dr Ify Okocha, chief



executive of Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust, James Duncan, chief executive of Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust, and Rebecca Gray, director of the NHS Confederation's Mental Health Network, unpack the mental health implications of the government's 10 Year Health Plan.

### ***The King's Fund***

[Shifting to prevention: how integrated care systems can tackle cardiovascular disease](#): cardiovascular disease remains one of the biggest drivers of poor health and early death, yet so much of it is preventable. Across England, integrated care systems are starting to shift from treatment to prevention, using data, teamwork and targeted interventions to catch risk factors early and act before harm is done. But this transformation isn't easy. What's working and what still stands in the way? Explore how prevention is gaining ground and what it takes to make it stick

**Blog:** [Race inequalities for NHS staff: looking back on the WRES data](#) - Amid a sense of decline in support for EDI initiatives, Shilpa Ross examines the latest Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) data. Has the NHS taken enough action?

## **9. National health news this week**

- **Plan to keep 'business as usual' during doctor strike poses risk to patients, NHS warned** - The Independent is one of many papers to highlight the potential impact of the forthcoming strike by resident doctors. It says the chief executive of NHS England, Sir Jim Mackey, has urged hospital leaders to keep routine operations and appointments going if possible and to only cancel if there is a risk to patient safety.
- **Sympathy wanes for resident doctors preparing to go on strike** - The Financial Times leads on a different line about the dispute, highlighting 'waning public sympathy' and support for the planned strike.
- **Shop-bought health tests not always fit for purpose, researchers warn** - The Standard reports a warning that off-the-shelf health tests for issues such as high cholesterol, vitamin deficiency, fertility and prostate problems may not be fit for purpose.
- **NHS launches major search for donors with rare blood types** - PA reports that the NHS has launched a pioneering initiative to identify and secure blood donations from people with rare blood types, ensuring patients receive "precision-matched" transfusions.
- **Mental health care 'being rationed' over failure to cut spiralling waiting list, top doctor warns** - The Independent reports that the president of the Royal College of Psychiatrists said mental health care was being downgraded in favour of other services.
- **NHS bosses putting patients at risk in strike, says BMA** - The BBC highlights a warning by the British Medical Association that NHS England's plan to limit the number of routine treatments being cancelled is putting patients at risk of harm.
- **Relatives of dead infected blood victims will get compensation** - The Telegraph reports on changes to compensation payouts for people infected with contaminated blood and those indirectly affected by the scandal.
- **NHS facing 'absolutely shocking' £27bn bill for maternity failings in England** - The Guardian reports that analysis of NHS figures shows the potential bill for maternity negligence in England since 2019 has reached

£27.4bn – far more than the health service’s roughly £18bn budget for newborns in that time.

- **Groundbreaking cancer trial to recruit patients within the NHS** - PA reports that a new immunotherapy drug trial for glioblastoma, the deadliest form of brain cancer, is now recruiting patients in the NHS.