

Health & Wellbeing Board 09 March 2026 | Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole

This meeting marked a shift from strategy to delivery across Dorset and BCP, with emphasis on neighbourhood health, prevention, and place-based working. Decisions taken reinforce that voluntary and community organisations are expected partners in delivery, not peripheral contributors.

NHS Dorset ICB Five-Year Commissioning Plan – Endorsed

The Board endorsed the ICB's Five-Year Commissioning Plan, which prioritises prevention, reducing inequalities, neighbourhood health models, and co-design with communities. The plan will continue to evolve as local neighbourhood health plans are developed.

CAN Perspective:

This endorsement creates a clear mandate for community-based delivery. The challenge will be ensuring VCSE capacity, sustainability, and influence are embedded as plans move from intent to implementation.

Developing a Place-Based Partnership (PBP) for BCP – Major System Development

The Board supported the establishment of a BCP Place-Based Partnership as an officer-led executive delivery group, accountable to the Health & Wellbeing Board and aligned with the ICB Cluster Board. It will oversee key programmes including neighbourhood health, prevention, joint commissioning, and the Better Care Fund, with potential to manage pooled resources and delegated commissioning.

CAN Perspective:

The PBP will be a central locus of power and decision-making. How the voluntary and community sector is engaged, represented, and resourced within this structure will significantly affect future funding and delivery opportunities.

Community Safety Partnership Annual Report – Rising Need, Constrained Funding

The Board noted reduced antisocial behaviour but highlighted concerns around domestic abuse funding remaining static, misalignment of serious violence funding with local priorities, and insufficient support for night-time economy safety and violence against women and girls. VCSE contributions were explicitly recognised.

CAN Perspective:

Statutory partners are increasingly reliant on charities to deliver essential safety and safeguarding outcomes while funding pressures intensify. This reinforces the need for collective VCSE advocacy on sustainable funding and realistic expectations.

Better Care Fund Q3 Report – Ongoing System Pressure

Despite reports indicating activity was on track, members acknowledged sustained pressure from discharge delays, people being supported in inappropriate settings, and uncertainty around future local authority and Better Care Fund funding.

CAN Perspective:

These pressures are already being absorbed by charities supporting carers, discharge, housing, and community care. Without secure, long-term funding, the risk of transferring system pressure to the VCSE will continue.

Key Implications for Local Charity Leaders**Neighbourhood Health Is Broad and Inclusive**

Neighbourhood health was framed as encompassing prevention, safety, housing, food access, and community resilience, not just clinical services.

Place-Based Partnership Will Shape the Future

The PBP will influence commissioning, priorities, and resource allocation.

Funding Pressures Will Likely Intensify

Static or redirected funding, alongside rising demand, was a consistent theme.

Co-production and Lived Experience Are Expected

The Board stressed the importance of resident voice, lived experience, and clear communication.