

Report to July 2026 Meeting of CBC Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Summary of 26th May 2026 Meeting of GCC Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

A full recording of this meeting is available in the meetings section of the GCC website. The agenda reports pack which includes presentations is also available on this website with the SWAST report attached separately. At the time of writing this report the minutes were not yet available.

1. Scrutiny Items –

1.1 Maternity Update

Currently mothers in Gloucestershire are being offered either obstetric-led care in the Delivery Suite within the Women's Centre in Gloucestershire Royal Hospital or midwifery-led care at Stroud Maternity Unit and Gloucester Birth Unit, both of which offer birth in more homely environments and have ample capacity

GHT (Gloucestershire Hospitals Trust) has come up with a series of proposals to try to improve the choice offered and reopen the Aveta Unit at Cheltenham General addressing the following issues:

- Home birth provision has been subject to suspension
- Cheltenham has remained closed because it has not been possible to staff it safely and consistently
- Birth numbers at Stroud are low, meaning staffing is not well aligned with actual demand

The aim of these changes being to ensure services are focused around the needs and choices of the woman and that staff are deployed to where care is needed, rather than routinely staffing empty buildings

The proposed new model would create a countywide Community Birth Team that would:

- support births at home, Stroud and Cheltenham
- Provide flexibility across community birth settings
- Support up to two simultaneous births
- Allow scope for future expansion if demand grows

These changes would mean that Stroud and Cheltenham would remain available 24/7 for labour and birth, the units would open when a woman needs labour and birth care avoiding staffing a building when no one is in labour. This approach reflects models used elsewhere in the South West and beyond and using this model, other areas of England have successfully increased home births and midwife-led centre access.

A process of staff consultation has now began and estates work required to prepare Cheltenham for reopening is being planned. Any national recommendations from the

Baroness Amos report due to be published shortly will need to be factored in to any final proposal and implementation is planned by Autumn 2026.

2. Information Items – see presentations for full details:

2.1 Gloucestershire Integrated Care System (ICS) Performance Report

Despite demand for A&E services continuing to escalate, with 452 patients currently being seen every day, the average wait has decreased by 33 minutes to 5 hours and 6 minutes and 64.6% of patients being seen and treated within 4 hours. Additionally, average ambulance waits have reduced by 72% to 22 minutes. This all represents further vindication for the changes made to the A&E patient pathway which have at times received adverse comment including from HOSC members.

At the start of 2024/25 there were 3000 patients waiting over 52 weeks for their procedure, that figure is now down to 129 or 0.2% of the total waiting list with only 6 of those with the local service (GHT). There is also some improvement in the 18 week RTT (referral to treatment) performance with 74.5% of patients now meeting that target compared with 70% at the end of 2023. It is still some way away from the actual target of 92% but it is the best performance of any Trust in the South West.

Performance against all the Cancer Waiting Times (CWTs) targets is good compared with national and regional averages, even the performance against the 62-day target from referral to first definitive treatment has improved significantly to 82.2%, still below the target of 85% but well above the interim national target of 75%. The improvement has been driven by changes to the prostate pathway.

Growth in demand for diagnostics continues and whilst capacity in almost all modalities continues to rise to deal with this and indeed less patients are waiting over 6 weeks than when I last reported (approx. 3500 down from 4500). Despite increased capacity 1600 patients are waiting over 6 weeks for echocardiography and the number is still increasing. Performance in all 3 endoscopy modalities has now stabilised but 37% of patients continue to wait over 6 weeks. More non-recurring slots have been purchased from Great Western Hospitals to try to address this. Finally, CT, despite record numbers of appointment slots this modality has seen over 6 week waits rise to 330 patients.

Appointments in general practice remain at record levels with 410,000 appointments in January 2026 alone. Community pharmacy continues to play a significant role in supporting primary care access. In 2025/26 to the end of January 2026, community pharmacies delivered 67,178 patient consultations across a number of clinical pathways such as blood pressure checks and oral contraception services. This represents an increase of 21,184 consultations (46%) compared to the previous year.

2.2 NHS Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board (ICB) Update – this report is divided into 2 sections

- Section 1, an update on national and local commissioning issues focusing mostly on this occasion on the reorganisation of commissioning services with NHS Gloucestershire ICB now working closely with NHS Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire ICB with a joint executive team now in place.
- Section 2, an update from the 3 provider Trusts; Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust (GHC), Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (GHT) and South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust.

The GHT report noted that the Trust has reached a significant milestone in the development of the new Gloucestershire Cancer Centre at Cheltenham General , with the planning application being submitted at the end of March 2026. This marks the completion of the early design phase and enables the programme to progress into the next stage of delivery. The new centre is intended to modernise facilities that are now more than 25 years old and respond to rising demand and changing patient needs across Gloucestershire and the wider region.

Also, the CQC recently reported on the dialysis service at GRH and rated it as 'good'.