

Consultation on midwife-led birthing services at County Hospital and Samuel Johnson Community Hospital

Communications & Engagement Plan

Overview

The consultation on midwife-led birthing services at County Hospital, Stafford, and Samuel Johnson Community Hospital, Lichfield, set out a proposal to make permanent the temporary closures made in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A formal public consultation took place between 12 May 2025 and 3 August 2025 where more than 1,400 responses were received.

While birthing services have remained closed, antenatal and postnatal care has continued at both sites, with the exception that Glucose Tolerance Testing (GTT) and Anti-D injections have not been offered at Samuel Johnson Community Hospital since the pandemic. Targeted engagement took place throughout February 2026 to identify any necessary mitigations, as these services moved from Samuel Johnson Community Hospital, Lichfield, to other locations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Feedback gathered through the consultation and further engagement has informed a Report of Findings, which was discussed at a technical event in April 2026. The Report of Findings will be published on the ICB website on 29 May 2026 and will support the development of a Decision-Making Business Case (DMBC), which will progress through the ICB governance process.

Purpose

The purpose of this communications and engagement plan is to ensure that local communities, stakeholders, staff, partners and elected representatives are kept informed throughout the next stages of the process and key decision-making milestones.

The plan aims to:

- Provide clear, accurate and timely information
- Maintain transparency throughout the governance and decision-making process
- Support awareness and understanding of the next steps
- Ensure stakeholders are appropriately briefed ahead of key announcements and meetings

Key dates

Date	Activity
29 May 2026	Report of Findings published on the ICB website and stakeholder briefing circulated.
8 July 2026	Decision-Making Business Case (DMBC) and Report of Findings presented to the ICB Strategic Commissioning and Transformation Committee
24 September 2026	Decision-Making Business Case (DMBC) and Report of Findings presented to the ICB Board and a media release and stakeholder briefing will be circulated after the meeting takes place.

Action plan and Timeline

Task	Activity	Deadline	Lead	Status
Exec briefing	Draft exec briefing – share key dates and highlight that Report of Findings (RoF) will be going on the website on 29 May – share updated narrative for website?	15 May 2026	Comms – Jess	Complete
Exec briefing	Send briefing to Mish and Lorna	18 May 2026	Comms - Jess	Complete
Exec briefing	Update on publication of Consultation Report of Findings (RoF) to be shared with ICB Exec meeting	21 May 2026	Lorna and Mish	Complete - email sent to execs
Stakeholder comms	Draft: • Comms plan • General stakeholder Comms • Specific letter for OSC • Specific letter for attendees to events/those who have completed the survey and given contact details • Press response	21 May 2026	Comms - Jess	Complete

Stakeholder comms	Review and feedback on stakeholder comms	22 May – 27 May	All	Complete
Stakeholder comms	Sign off final stakeholder comms	28 May 2026		Complete
Publish	Publication of RoF on ICB webpage – update narrative and upload RoF. Jess to check with Aisleen about where to upload the RoF on the website as Kerry reported issues with the UEC RoF	29 May 2026	Comms- Jess	Complete
Stakeholder comms	Stakeholder briefings to be circulated	29 May 2026	Comms- Jess	Complete
Exec briefing	Prepare briefing and slides for ICB exec meeting	16 June 2026	Comms – Jess	Complete
DMBC development	DMBC and impact assessments to be finalised and signed off.	23 June 2026	All	
Exec briefing	Update given at exec meeting ahead of ICB Strategic Commissioning and Transformation Committee (SCTC)	23 June 2026	Lorna, Mish, Lynn T	
DMBC	Decision making business case (DMBC) shared with SCTC ahead of paper submission	23 June 2026	Gina	
DMBC	Papers submitted to SCTC	30 June 2026	Gina	
DMBC	DMBC and RoF presented to SCTC	08 July 2026	Gina	
	Share SCTC cover sheet and recommendations with DMBC and RoF			
Exec briefing	UHDB and UHNM to update appropriate Exec meetings ahead of DMBC and RoF going to ICB Board.	15 July – 17 Sept 2026		
UHDB exec briefing	Closed UHDB Trust Board Meeting – brief board members on the decision being recommended to the ICB	16 September 2026	Helen Ashley	

Exec briefing	Prepare briefing and slides for ICB exec meeting	Early-Mid September (TBC)	Comms	
Exec briefing	Give an update to ICB execs (ahead of ICB Board meeting)	Early-Mid September (TBC)	Mish, Lorna and Lynn T	
DMBC	DMBC shared with ICB Board ahead of Board papers	10 Sept 2026	Gina	
DMBC and RoF	Papers submitted to Board	14 Sept 2026	Gina	
Stakeholder comms	Draft media release and stakeholder briefings	4 September	Comms	
Stakeholder comms	Review and edit media release and stakeholder briefings	5 September – 21 September	Comms	
Stakeholder comms	Sign off media release and stakeholder briefings	22 September 2026	All	
DMBC and RoF	DMBC and RoF presented to Board	24 Sept 2026		
Stakeholder comms	Media release and stakeholder briefings to sent after ICB Board meeting.	24 September 2026	Comms	

Communications channel and audience

[illegible]

Appendix

Appendix 1: Briefing for execs ****DISTRIBUTED****

Following the public consultation on midwife-led birthing services at County Hospital, Stafford, and Samuel Johnson Community Hospital, Lichfield, additional targeted engagement took place throughout February to better understand the impact of the current arrangements for Glucose Tolerance Testing (GTT) and Anti-D services, and to identify any potential mitigations.

Feedback gathered through the consultation and further engagement has informed a Report of Findings, which was discussed at a technical event in April 2026. The Report of Findings will be published on the ICB website on 29 May 2026 and will support the development of a Decision-Making Business Case (DMBC), which will progress through the ICB governance process.

Key dates:

- Report of Findings published on the ICB website and stakeholder briefing circulated: **29 May 2026**
- Decision-Making Business Case (DMBC) and Report of Findings presented to the ICB Strategic Commissioning and Transformation Committee: **8 July 2026**
- Decision-Making Business Case (DMBC) and Report of Findings presented to the ICB Board: **24 September 2026** (following the Board meeting, a media release and stakeholder briefing will be circulated).

Background information:

The consultation on midwife-led birthing services at County Hospital, Stafford, and Samuel Johnson Community Hospital, Lichfield, set out a proposal to make permanent the temporary closures made in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A formal public consultation took place between 12 May 2025 and 3 August 2025 where more than 1,400 responses were received.

While birthing services have remained closed, antenatal and postnatal care has continued at both sites, with the exception that Glucose Tolerance Testing (GTT) and Anti-D injections have not been offered at Samuel Johnson Community Hospital since the pandemic. Targeted engagement took place throughout February 2026 to identify any necessary mitigations, as these services moved from Samuel Johnson Community Hospital, Lichfield, to other locations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Appendix 2: General stakeholder update ****DISTRIBUTED****

Publication of the Report of Findings: Consultation on Midwife-Led Birthing Services at County Hospital and Samuel Johnson Community Hospital

The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board (ICB) has **today** published the Report of Findings [**<link>**](#) following the public consultation on midwife-led birthing services at County Hospital, Stafford, and Samuel Johnson Community Hospital, Lichfield.

The consultation considered a proposal to make permanent the temporary closure of the freestanding midwife-led birthing units introduced in March 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. The formal public consultation took place between 12 May 2025 and 3 August 2025, with more

than 1,400 responses received from members of the public, stakeholders and partner organisations.

While birthing services have remained closed, antenatal and postnatal care has continued at both sites. Since the pandemic, Glucose Tolerance Testing (GTT) and Anti-D services have not been provided at Samuel Johnson Community Hospital, with these services delivered from alternative locations.

To better understand the impact of the current arrangements for GTT and Anti-D services, and to identify any potential mitigations, additional targeted engagement was undertaken throughout February 2026. Feedback gathered through both the consultation and further engagement activity informed the development of the Report of Findings, which was discussed at a technical event in April 2026.

The Report of Findings will support the development of a Decision-Making Business Case, which will progress through the ICB's governance process, with the aim of being considered by the ICB Board in early autumn.

It is important to note that no decision has yet been made regarding the future of midwife-led birthing services at County Hospital or Samuel Johnson Community Hospital. The Report of Findings forms part of the ongoing process to ensure all feedback and evidence is fully considered before any final decision is taken.

Appendix 3: Letter to Staffordshire OSC **DISTRIBUTED**

Monday 1 June 2026

Dear Members of the Staffordshire Overview and Scrutiny Committee,

Re: Consultation on Midwife-Led Birthing Services at County Hospital, Stafford, and Samuel Johnson Community Hospital, Lichfield

I am writing to update the Committee following the publication of the Report of Findings relating to the consultation on midwife-led birthing services at County Hospital and Samuel Johnson Community Hospital. We would like to thank members of the Staffordshire Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their engagement and involvement throughout this process.

The consultation considered a proposal to make permanent the temporary closure of the freestanding midwife-led birthing units introduced in March 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. A formal public consultation took place between 12 May 2025 and 3 August 2025, during which more than 1,400 responses were received from members of the public, stakeholders and partner organisations.

While birthing services have remained closed, antenatal and postnatal services have continued at both sites. Since the pandemic, Glucose Tolerance Testing (GTT) and Anti-D services have not been provided at Samuel Johnson Community Hospital, with these services delivered from alternative locations.

Additional targeted engagement was undertaken throughout February 2026 to better understand the impact of the current arrangements for GTT and Anti-D services, and to identify any potential mitigations. Feedback gathered through the consultation and further engagement activity

informed the development of the Report of Findings, which was discussed at a technical event in April 2026 and has today been published on the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board (ICB) website [<link>](#).

The Report of Findings will support the development of a Decision-Making Business Case, which will progress through the ICB's governance process, with the aim of being considered by the ICB Board in early autumn.

It is important to note that no decision has yet been made regarding the future of midwife-led birthing services at County Hospital or Samuel Johnson Community Hospital. The Report of Findings forms part of the ongoing process to ensure all feedback and evidence is fully considered before any final decision is taken.

Yours sincerely,

[<name>](#)

[<job title>](#)

Appendix 4: Email to engaged members of the public

Good morning

You are receiving this email as you have opted to receive updates about the public consultation on midwife-led birthing services at County Hospital, Stafford, and Samuel Johnson Community Hospital, Lichfield. **We would like to thank you for taking the time to participate in the consultation and for sharing your views.**

Following the public consultation and further engagement activity relating to Glucose Tolerance Testing (GTT) and Anti-D services, the Report of Findings has now been published on the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board (ICB) website [<link>](#).

No decision has yet been made regarding the future of midwife-led birthing services at County Hospital or Samuel Johnson Community Hospital.

The Report of Findings forms part of the ongoing process to ensure all feedback and evidence is fully considered before any final decision is taken. It will support the development of a Decision-Making Business Case, which will progress through the ICB's governance process, with the aim of being considered by the ICB Board in early autumn.

Kind Regards

Communications and Engagement Team

Appendix 5: Webpage text update

Report of Findings: Consultation on Midwife-Led Birthing Services at County Hospital and Samuel Johnson Community Hospital

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While birthing services have remained closed, antenatal and postnatal care has continued at both sites. Since the pandemic, Glucose Tolerance Testing (GTT) and Anti-D services have not been provided at Samuel Johnson Community Hospital, with these services delivered from alternative locations. Additional targeted engagement was undertaken throughout February 2026 to better understand the impact of these arrangements and identify any potential mitigations.

The Report of Findings summarises the feedback received through both the public consultation and further engagement activity. It will support development of a Decision-Making Business Case, which will progress through the ICB's governance process, with the aim of being considered by the ICB Board in early autumn.

No decision has yet been made regarding the future of midwife-led birthing services at either site. All feedback and evidence gathered through the consultation and engagement process will be fully considered before any final decision is taken.

[<Link to Report of Findings>](#)

[<Link to Summary??>](#)

Appendix 6: Press enquiry response

The Report of Findings has now been published on the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board (ICB) website [<link>](#) and will support the development of a Decision-Making Business Case, which will progress through the ICB's governance process, with the aim of being considered by the ICB Board in early autumn.

No decision has been made regarding the future of midwife-led birthing services at County Hospital, Stafford or Samuel Johnson Community Hospital, Lichfield. The Report of Findings forms part of the ongoing decision-making process and ensures feedback gathered through both the public consultation and further engagement activity is fully considered before any final decision is taken.

Media handling: Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent ICB Communications Team - ssotics.comms@staffsstoke.icb.nhs.uk. For media enquiries outside normal office hours, please call 0333 150 1602.