



North Central London
Integrated Care Board



North West London

**North Central London ICB and North West London ICB
Board of Members Meeting in Common
24th March 2026**

Report Title	Transition Update	Date of report	24 th March 2026	Agenda Item	2.1
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Name of Authorising Finance Lead	Stephen Bloomer, Chief Finance Officer	Summary of Financial Implications The West and North London (WNL) ICB will need to meet the £19 per head cost requirement from 1 April 2026. The timely and successful delivery of the transition programme is a critical enabler of this requirement and will result in significant reductions to the future capacity of the newly merged organisation.			
Report Summary	Following the update to the North Central London (NCL) ICB and North West London (NWL) ICB Board of Members in-common in January 2026, this paper provides the Boards with a further update on the transition programme and the merger of NCL and NWL ICBs on 1 April 2026. This paper includes updates on the final stages of merger preparation and associated assurance on readiness. The report also outlines next steps for the subsequent phase of transition for WNL.				
Recommendation	The Boards are asked to NOTE the progress made and next steps for the transition programme.				
Identified Risks and Risk Management Actions	The significant reductions to ICBs, continue to present a number of key risks – including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial risk in achieving cost reduction requirements – with merger and the new organisational design being key to mitigation. Staff and partner organisation uncertainties – part mitigated through robust communications and engagement plans. Future organisational capacity – with clear prioritisation of key activity, including in the context of the nationally set Model ICB, being an important factor in mitigation. 				
Conflicts of Interest	Not applicable.				

Resource Implications	<p>Significant financial, HR, IT, Communications & Engagement, senior leadership and wider staffing resources are continuing to be utilised to deliver all aspects of the transition programme.</p> <p>Capacity continues to be utilised to deliver the final stages of the rationalisation of corporate office estates across the two ICBs.</p>
Engagement	<p>Extensive engagement with staff, trade unions, and stakeholders through briefings, FAQs, and joint intranet content.</p>
Equality Impact Analysis	<p>An updated equality impact assessment has been undertaken as part of the outcome of the current staff consultation on future organisational design. A further and final update will be completed once the voluntary redundancy agreements have been signed.</p>
Report History and Key Decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 2025: Boards agreed to merge. • September / October 2025: update to Boards • November 2025: National approval for voluntary redundancy scheme. • December 2025: update report to NCL and NWL Boards in-common • January 2026: update to Boards • March 2026: update to joint Transition Committee
Next Steps	<p>In nearing the 1 April merger, focus will shift towards the next phase of transition – with key activity including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment into the new organisational design • Board development • Embedding new corporate governance arrangements • Setting of vision, strategies, priorities and values • Continuation of stakeholder and partnership engagement/development • Further preparations for the transfer of services
Appendices	<p>Not applicable.</p>

Transition Update – Creation of West and North London Integrated Care Board (ICB)

1. Introduction and Overview

Further to the updates provided to the Boards in-Common on 04 December 2025 and 28 January 2026, this report provides a further update on progress in delivering the transition to the West and North London Integrated Care Board (WNL ICB). The report also follows a strategic update provided to the ICBs' Joint Transition Committee at its meeting on 2 March 2026.

The merger element of the transition programme continues to focus on organisational readiness for 1 April 2026. Delivery remains structured around the transition workstreams, with assurance provided through internal governance arrangements and the NHS England (NHSE) merger assurance process.

2. Overall Programme Status and Merger Assurance

The latest full merger assurance submission was provided to NHSE on 23 February 2026 and confirms that the programme remains in a strong position, with close and constructive engagement continuing with the NHSE London regional team. On 02 March, the ICBs' Chief Executive submitted an assurance letter to NHSE Regional Director, on behalf of both North Central London (NCL) and North West London (NWL) ICBs. The letter affirmed compliance regarding the due diligence required to allow for the disestablishment of the ICBs and the safe and timely establishment of the new West and North London ICB on 1 April. A response has since been received confirming that the Regional Team views that the action taken to date, and that is planned for the future, is robust and appropriate and in line with relevant NHS E guidance, including the due diligence requirements which the ICBs have used proactively and constructively to prepare for and deliver the change.

The final phase of merger approval is the formal issuing by the NHS Executive of the orders to dissolve North Central London and North West London ICBs and establish the new West and North London ICB. We are expecting, at the time of writing this report, these orders to be issued around the 17 March 2026.

To further support merger preparations, an independent internal audit review has been undertaken by RSM, North West London ICB's internal auditors. This review has concluded with the issuing of a "Substantial Assurance" classification, providing further confidence in programme governance and controls. The outcome of this review has been presented to North West London ICB's Audit Committee.

As the programme enters its final pre-merger phase, attention is increasingly turning to planning for the next stage of transition beyond 1 April, including retention of corporate memory, staff support through organisational change, and establishing a strong foundation to progress the new ICB's vision, priorities, values and ways of working.

3. Organisational Redesign, Consultation and Workforce

The formal staff consultation on future organisational design and transfer of employer concluded on 25 January 2026. Consultation outcomes were communicated to staff on 23 February 2026, following an agreed short extension to accommodate changes to roles and structures, appeals activity and half-term timing. Final consultation materials set out the

agreed organisational structures, impacts, updated Equality Impact Assessment and next steps.

Voluntary Redundancy (VR) applications were approved on 12 February, with outcomes issued to staff on 24 February 2026. The majority of VR exits are planned for 30 April 2026, allowing for appropriate handover arrangements and continuity of business-critical activity. Executive oversight is in place to ensure that exits are managed sensitively and safely, with Organisational Development (OD) support available to staff.

Inclusive selection processes are scheduled to take place between April and June 2026. Trained managers and Recruitment Inclusion Advisors will support selection panels to minimise bias and ensure fair and transparent decision-making.

Key workforce risks continue to be actively managed. Work is progressing to ensure a safe payroll transfer from NWL's current payroll provider, Civica to NCL's payroll provider, North of England CSU. Wellbeing and career transition support capacity is under review and being strengthened. prioritised review of key HR and OD policies is underway to ensure those required for 1 April are in place, with transitional arrangements anticipated where capacity constraints exist.

4. Corporate Governance and Board Arrangements

As part of the Corporate and Governance workstream, the draft Constitution for the WNL ICB has been submitted to the NHSE regional team and is awaiting formal sign-off. Recruitment to the Board of Members is in the final stages and remains on track for completion in time for 1 April 2026.

Due to forthcoming local elections, Local Authority Partner Members will initially be appointed on a short-term basis, in line with the provisions of the Constitution. Board and Committee meeting schedules for 2026/27 are currently being finalised. The initial 'set-up' meeting for the new Board of Members will take place on 1 April, with the first full Board meeting scheduled for 22 July.

A broader governance review is being undertaken, including arrangements below Committee level, Standing Financial Instructions (SFIs) and the Scheme of Reservation and Delegation (SoRD), and remain on track for approval on 1 April 2026. In total, 78 organisational policies have been prioritised for alignment ahead of go-live, with further policy alignment planned during early 2026/27. The new Board of Members will be asked to approve the policies that have been aligned through both current ICBs' recognised governance arrangements.

5. Information Technology and Information Governance

The IT workstream continues to make good progress in preparing systems and infrastructure for the new organisation. Marylebone Road is being established as the new ICB's headquarters, with fit-for-purpose ICT capability to enable staff within West and North London ICB to work effectively. A single Service Desk is being established to ensure users' queries are addressed on a timely basis.

Work has continued to unify the identified business-critical systems ahead of 1 April merger. These are in relation to HR, Payroll, Finance, IT and corporate operations, with a wider set of systems scheduled for post-merger alignment. A single IT service desk solution and a single telephony provider have been agreed, with transition plans in place to provide a single point of access for corporate users from 1 April 2026.

Migration plans are being developed with departments to enable the shared data and personal data to be moved to N365 (national cloud tenancy). Finalisation of the national ODS code remains a dependency impacting SharePoint tenant consolidation and the move to a single data warehouse; this continues to be closely monitored.

Information Governance arrangements for the new organisation are well-developed. Senior Information Risk Owner, Caldicott Guardian and Data Protection Officer roles have been confirmed, and Data Security and Protection Toolkit submissions remain on track with no significant issues identified. West and North London ICB registration with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has been completed, and priority Information Governance policies have been consolidated and merged.

6. Finance and Contracting

The Finance and Contracting workstream continues to progress both technical merger activity and financial year-end requirements. All required merger templates have been submitted to NHS Shared Business Services within deadlines.

Key elements of readiness include payroll, VAT and HMRC notifications, banking arrangements transferring to the new organisation on 1 April, and progress towards a single general ledger. Procurement for new external auditors is complete. Arrangements are also in place to ensure continued internal audit and counter fraud specialist support.

The principal financial risk remains the compressed timetable for technical merger activity, compounded by the early adoption of the ISFE2 system. This risk is being actively managed through close engagement with national teams and targeted escalation where required. Additionally, internal capacity to help mitigate this risk is in place. Plans are in place to notify suppliers of upcoming changes.

7. Communications, Engagement and Corporate Accommodation

Work continues to prepare for the closure of the existing organisations and the establishment of WNL ICB. A comprehensive communications plan is in place to support staff, partners, stakeholders and the public through the transition period, maintaining proactive communication with our key audiences throughout transition.

A new corporate website has also been developed, as well as a SharePoint intranet for staff and both will go live on 1 April 2026.

New ICB branding has been finalised and will be reflected in the refurbishment of the Marylebone Road headquarters. The refurbishment work, to put in place a fit-for-purpose modern working environment for WNL ICB staff, is nearing completion to time. The Euston Road headquarters site has now been closed, and the work continues, as planned, to exit the Laycock Street site in early April. A plan is in place to enable all WNL staff to access the Marylebone Road offices, shared across the working week. These changes to the office headquarters arrangements will make a significant financial contribution to the ICB's requirement to reduce running costs by 50%.

8. Complex Care / Continuing Healthcare

In line with the ICBs' discussions and agreements since December 2025, the work on the future delivery of Complex Care responsibilities progresses well to ensure the services are unaffected by the national changes to ICBs' roles for 2026/27. Firm proposals are ready for

the Boards' consideration and, following that, likely in April, a comprehensive communications plan will be implemented to ensure our service users and other key stakeholders are engaged and assured.

9. Next Steps

While work is nearing completion to successfully deliver the technical merger – Quarter 1 and 2 of 2026/27 will be an equally important next phase of the transition work. A plan is currently being developed for this phase with content including:

- **Organisational Design & Development:** Progressing full implementation of the WNL ICB organisational design, including recruitment, staff guidance and exits, directorate planning, and embedding values, learning and development opportunities, staff networks, wellbeing initiatives, team development and utilisation of the Marylebone Road office.
- **Corporate Governance & Strategy:** Advancing corporate vision and agreed Year 1 priorities, supporting the new Board and ICB committees / sub-committees, forward planning, risk management, audit planning, operational governance arrangements, further policy alignment, and developing the strategic commissioner role with a focus on neighbourhoods.
- **Partnerships, Stakeholder Engagement:** Clarifying and strengthening stakeholder and partnership arrangements, and developing the future patient and public engagement strategy
- **Ensuring the safe transfer of services,** including the Complex Care / Continuing Healthcare service – also ensuring safe transition for any residual service areas being provided through the CSU.
- **Further alignment and development of key systems, organisations processes and protocols.**

With this being the last transition report to the Boards of North Central London and North West London ICBs – it is timely to recognise and thank all of the staff, Board Members and our partners, who have been involved in the delivery of the transition programme to date. For our staff, this remains an uncertain and anxious time and despite this, the commitment, robustness and dedication that staff working on the programme have all shown is to be commended.