

# Heart Health Bedford

## Helping to reduce health inequalities in Black African and Black Caribbean Communities in Bedford Borough

The Learning and Action Network (LAN) Information Pack

April 2025

# 1

## Introduction

- This 'information pack' is designed to give you all the basic information you need about this project which is **focussed on improving treatment of high blood pressure for people of Black African and/or Black Caribbean heritage in Bedford Borough**.
- The work will be delivered through the Learning and Action Network (LAN).
- We, the **Bedford Borough Place team**, are leading the LAN project on behalf of the Integrated Care Board (ICB). We will be working in partnership with the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) and with the other Place Teams in Central Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes.
- The first project of its kind carried out by the BLMK ICB, we are excited to bring together our LAN team over 18 months up to May 2026.
- We hope by the end of this pack you will be clear confident about the Heart Health Bedford LAN Project.
- If you have any questions, you can contact us using the details at the end of the pack.
- *Information on these slides includes contribution from BLMK ICB, Bedford Borough Council and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement.*



# 2

## The Bedford Borough Neighbourhoods



BEDFORD  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

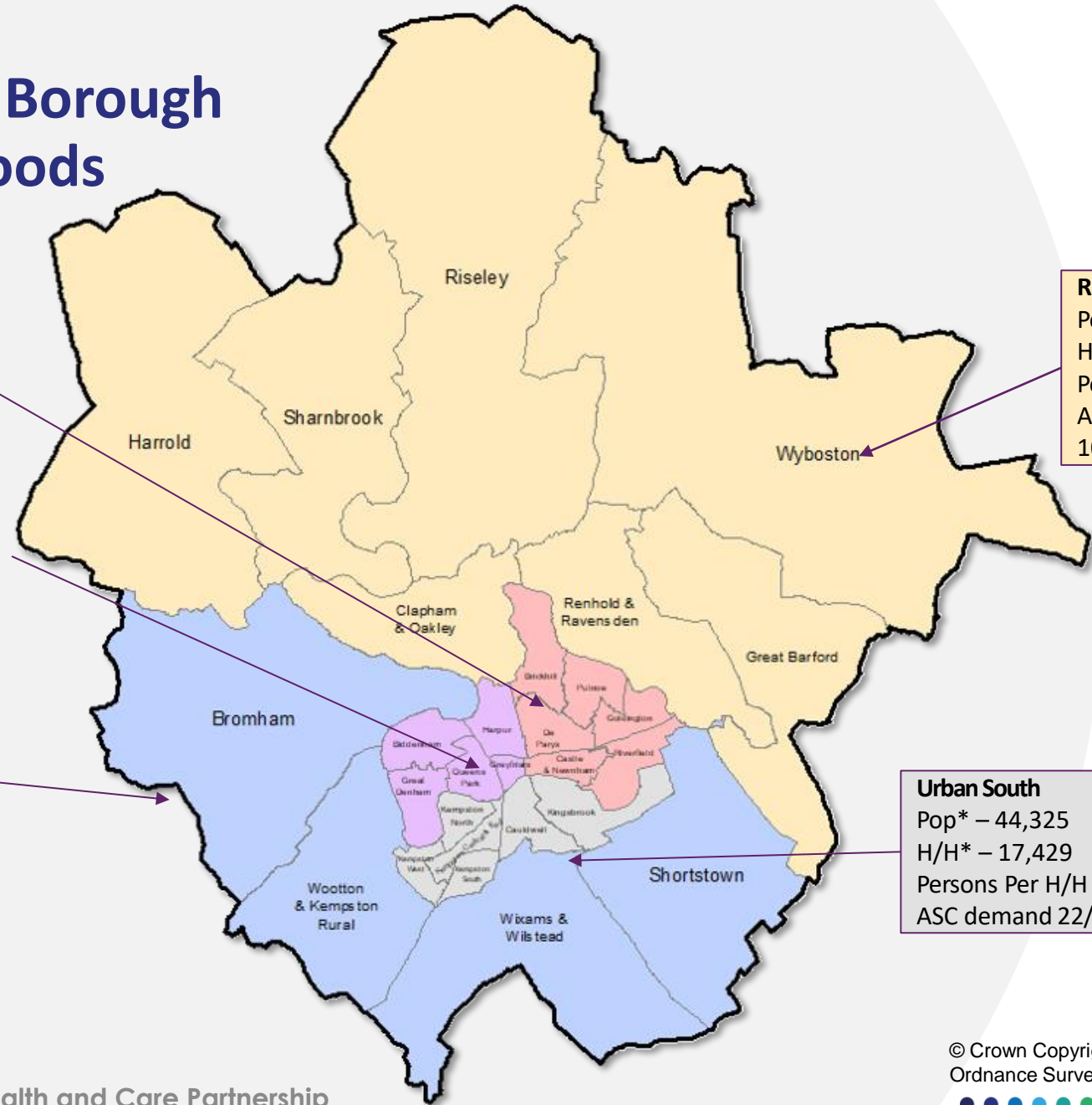
**Urban Northeast**  
 Population (Pop)\* – 45,179  
 Households (H/H)\* – 19,104  
 Persons Per H/H – 2.4  
 Adults Social Care (ASC) demand 22/23 – 207.8 per 10K pop

**Urban Northwest**  
 Pop\* – 31,082  
 H/H\* – 12,398  
 Persons Per H/H – 2.5  
 ASC demand 22/23 – 191.8 per 10K pop

**South**  
 Pop\* – 33,854  
 H/H\* – 13,238  
 Persons Per H/H – 2.6  
 ASC demand 22/23 – 108.4 per 10K pop

**Rural North**  
 Pop\* – 29,384  
 H/H\* – 12,774  
 Persons Per H/H – 2.3  
 ASC demand 22/23 – 116.7 per 10K pop

**Urban South**  
 Pop\* – 44,325  
 H/H\* – 17,429  
 Persons Per H/H – 2.6  
 ASC demand 22/23 – 180 per 10K pop



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 Ordnance Survey 100049028



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# Why focus on high blood pressure (also known as 'hypertension')?

- BLMK has the poorest attainment for treating people with high blood pressure (hypertension) to their target blood pressure (BP) in England, with approx. 40% of people with hypertension not managed to their BP target.
- Hypertension management is the biggest contributor to the gap in life expectancy between those living in the most and least deprived areas.
- There is a significant inequality gap in hypertension management with our most deprived population 7% less likely to be treated to target than our least deprived.
- There is significant variation in how well managed hypertension is between GP practices.
- Improving hypertension management has the greatest chance of preventing future heart attacks, strokes and deaths.



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# Key Findings about hypertension

- The number of people with hypertension increases as age increases. Nationally, males aged 55 to 74 years (15%) and females aged 65 to 74 years (16%) are estimated to be more likely to be underdiagnosed.
- All Black groups, on average, have a 1.7 times higher odds of being diagnosed with hypertension than the White British population.
- A lower proportion of people of Black ethnicity with known hypertension are treated to target (age-appropriate treatment threshold) even though hypertension is most prevalent for this group.
- There is a trend of worse performance in hypertension management for more deprived areas, but there are some anomalies.
- Underperformance of treatment for the Black groups appear to be focused in the Urban South, Urban North-West and some in the Rural North neighbourhoods of Bedford Borough.



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# What is a Learning and Action Network (LAN)?

- The LAN is the overall name for a set of 'Improvement Teams' who will work together to improve the health of a specific population of focus by working on a project together.
- Each improvement team will have representatives from different organisations, with both lived and learned experience.
- In addition to providing guidance and structure around ways to improve health, IHI will also work in partnership with the ICB and the Improvement Teams to provide guidance around using Quality Improvement as the way to make improvements.



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# Who is the Institute of Healthcare Improvement?

For more than 30 years, the **Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI)** has used improvement science to advance and sustain better outcomes in health and health care across the world. IHI is proud to have significant work underway with partners in nearly every region of the world, collaborating with visionaries, leaders, and frontline practitioners to seek and achieve science-based improvements in health and health care.

**IHI believes that:** Health and health care can and must be better. There can be no quality without equity. Improvement science and methods drive results.

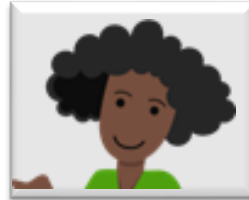
- The BLMK ICB have chosen [quality improvement](#) as the methodology for improving health and health care locally.
- The ICB has partnered with the Institute of Healthcare Improvement to do this and we will be working on this together through the [LAN](#).



# 7

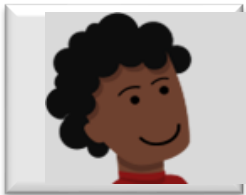
## Who is in the LAN team?

### The residents



We have lived experience for the focus population so will be suggesting ideas to test

### Sponsor



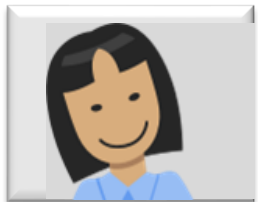
I will champion this work to the Integrated Care Board and unblock barriers

### Place based Team (Team Leader)



I will provide coordination, tracking and organising of the project

### Quality improvement Advisor/Coach



I will coach and advise you through your improvement journey by sharing methods and tools

### Subject Matter Experts



I will bring my subject matter knowledge and expertise



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# How does the LAN work?



A Learning and Action Network (LAN) is a **quality improvement 18-month programme** of learning and delivery of change together focusing on reducing ill health.



We will work as **equal partners** with **our residents**, **our partners** and the IHI.



We will focus on a **specific population** group in Bedford Borough. The other Places will focus on population groups based on their data.



The **launch** for this Learning and Action Network was in **November 2024**

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# What we have done so far

- Created information packs with demographics showing which age, gender and ethnic groups have the highest level of high blood pressure in Bedford Borough.
- Held workshops attended by GPs, clinicians, pharmacists, Public Health, Healthwatch, residents and voluntary sector colleagues and cardiovascular long-term conditions specialists.
- Formed a group of 'Core Team Members'
- The Core Team:
  - Agreed to focus on the population group(s) and location(s) with the highest number of people not having the correct treatment for their high blood pressure.
  - Agreed an Aim Statement
  - Created posters and started an engagement campaign
  - Shared a survey with local residents which received 122 responses.
  - Shared a survey with clinicians at each GP surgery.
  - Created a 'Driver Diagram' with over 40 change ideas
  - Agreed on changes to test at each GP surgery as part of the PDSA Cycle (Plan, Do, Study, Act)



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## Aim Statement

- By the end of the Heart Health project in May 2026, 80% of the Black African & Black Caribbean population, aged 40-64, who have a diagnosis of hypertension alone, in the Urban South neighbourhood (Cauldwell, Kempston, and Kingsbrook wards) and are registered with one of the three practices serving this area (London Road Surgery, Cauldwell Medical Centre and King Street Surgery) will achieve a blood pressure reading of below 140/90 mmHg.



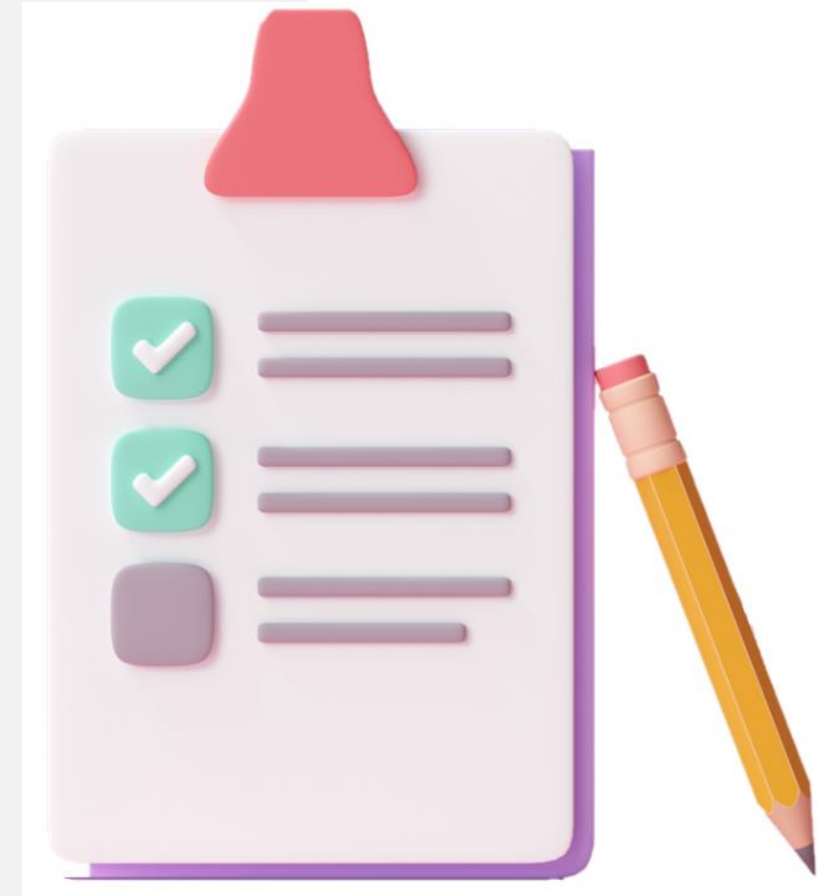
## 11

# Resident Survey Results

- Survey had 122 responses
  - 90% of respondents are Black African & Black Caribbean
  - 80% have a high blood pressure diagnosis
  - 90% are aged 40+

## Key Issues Highlighted - Barriers to Healthcare

- **Most respondents** feel that healthcare services do not engage with their community in creative and effective ways.
- **50%** of respondents find it difficult to get appointments at suitable times.
  - More than 30% feel there are not enough staff available to address their needs.
- **25%** of respondents trust herbal or traditional remedies more than medical treatments.
- More than **30%** of the respondents do not have access to digital tools like the NHS App or online booking.



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## Quality improvement process

1. Identify a population at Place

2. Identify what is already available

3. Create a structure for the work

4. Develop a clear aim

5. Develop a data collection plan

6. Start testing changes

Quality improvement is a process which allows us to follow a journey of learning & discovery together (detailed above).

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# Change Ideas

The Core Team developed change ideas to test on a small scale

Aim

Primary Driver

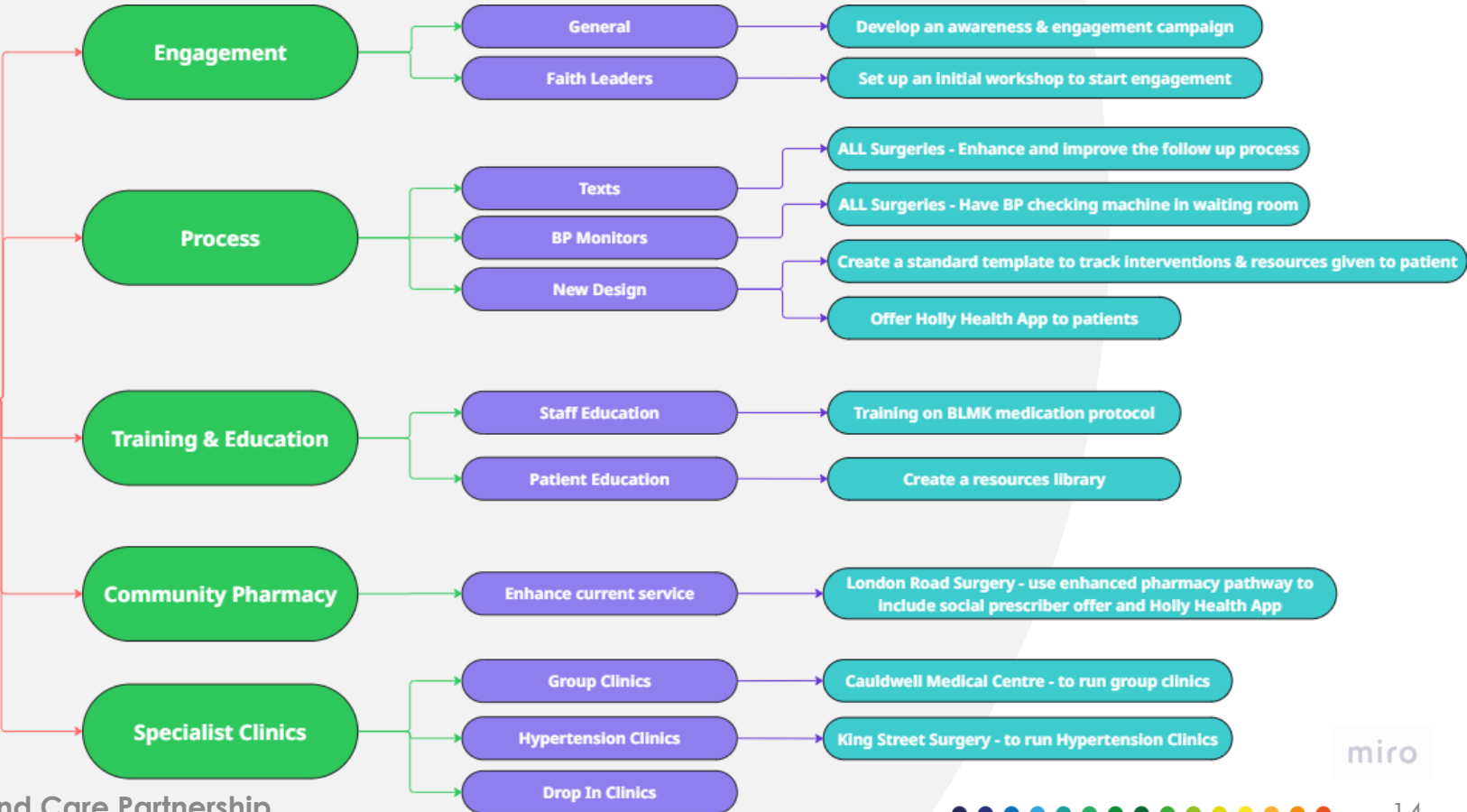
Secondary Driver

Change ideas

**BLACK AFRICAN & BLACK CARIBBEAN**  
**Heart Health Bedford**  
 Transforming Heart Health for Bedford's African & Caribbean Communities

**Aim**

By the end of the Heart Health Bedford project in May 2026, 80% of the Black African & Black Caribbean population, aged 40-64, who have a diagnosis of hypertension alone, in the Urban South neighbourhood (Cauldwell, Kempston and Kingsbrook wards) and are registered with one of the three practices serving this area (London Road Surgery, Cauldwell Medical Centre and King Street Surgery) will achieve a blood pressure reading of below 140/90 mmHg.



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## Where can people get their blood pressure checked?

- If you have not previously been diagnosed with high blood pressure visit one of these local pharmacies to get tested:
  - **Broadway Pharmacy:** 1 The Broadway, MK40 2TJ
  - **Janssens Pharmacy:** 28 Ampthill Road, MK429HG
  - **Kays Chemist:** 108 Bromham Road, MK40 2QH
  - **Lindleys Pharmacy:** 15 Ford End Road, MK40 4JE
  - **The Village Pharmacy:** Kingswood Way, MK40 4GH
- **Healthwise** are also offering drop in testing in May:
  - Kempston Pool and Fitness - Mondays between 3 and 4pm (1st – 31st May)
  - John Bunyan Sports & Fitness - Wednesdays between 1pm-2pm (1st – 31st May)

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## Questions?

- For further details or if you have any question, please contact Usha Panchal:

**E: [usha.panchal@nhs.net](mailto:usha.panchal@nhs.net) T: 07789935728**

