



Herefordshire General Practice

Taurus Healthcare

Annual Report 2023/24

To support our drive for excellence in General Practice, we utilise standards set by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) as part of our Quality Framework for monitoring clinical services and our organisational leadership and culture.



Are we effective?

People and communities have the best possible outcomes because their needs are assessed. Their care, support and treatment reflects these needs and any protected equality characteristics.

Are we responsive?

People and communities are always at the centre of how care is planned and delivered. The health and care needs of people and communities are understood and they are actively involved in planning care that meets these needs.

Are we well led?

There is an inclusive and positive culture of continuous learning and improvement. This is based on meeting the needs of people who use services and wider communities, and all leaders and staff share this.

Are we safe?

Safety is a priority for everyone and leaders embed a culture of openness and collaboration. People are always safe and protected from bullying, harassment, avoidable harm, neglect, abuse and discrimination.

Are we caring?

People are always treated with kindness, empathy and compassion. They understand that they matter and that their experience of how they are treated and supported matters.

Throughout this report we have used this colour coding system to highlight examples of how we work and where this aligns to CQC standard questions.

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“You really see the potential of primary care in terms particularly of prevention in a place like this.”

(Matthew Taylor, Chief Executive, NHS Confederation – on Twitter/X following a visit to Herefordshire General Practice, May 2024).

Introduction



As I reflect on the past year, I am reminded of the many significant achievements we have made, despite the substantial challenges we have faced. Details of some of these are outlined in this report but all have in common our core objective of planning, driving and delivering good quality healthcare for the people of Herefordshire.

A key strategy in the past year has been to focus on providing more population-focused and less organisation-centric care. This has meant continuing to

work with health and care partners to deliver ‘joined up care’ that makes sense to patients. We aim for a ‘One Herefordshire’ approach that reduces duplication and wastage in the system, provides clear pathways to services and delivers closer to patients’ homes. This is especially important for a rural county such as ours.

We have also made a concerted effort to continue to address health inequalities and to reach out to our ‘under-served’ communities. This has been done as part of our preventative agenda – for example, through our Talk Wellbeing service outreach programme and targeted PCN-led campaigns. The work has been facilitated by high quality, targeted population health management data provided by our Business Intelligence team. There is still a great deal of work to be done but we have made excellent progress this year.

I am proud that these achievements have been made despite the huge challenges being faced by General Practice. These include the ongoing

under-funding of our sector, which has resulted in the first collective action by GPs since the 1960s, not to mention political uncertainty and a recent change of government.

Nevertheless, we continue to be innovative and forward thinking and it is heartening that we often see Herefordshire’s direction of travel pre-empting national directives. For example, we are ahead of the curve when it comes to the development of Integrated Neighbourhood Teams and partnership working. And this will be further facilitated now that we have our own premises, Nelson House, which provides increased opportunity for collaborative working.

We are not complacent and there are significant challenges - and opportunities – ahead, including the ongoing ‘Change NHS’ consultation that will help shape the 10 Year Health Plan for England. However, our Annual Report provides the chance for us to reflect and celebrate some

of the successes we have achieved throughout the past year.

I do hope that you enjoy reading it.

Dr Nigel Fraser
GP Partner (Wargrave House Surgery)
Chairman, Taurus Healthcare Ltd



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How have we delivered to patients this year?

Highlights From 1 October 2023 to 30 September 2024

Herefordshire General Practice delivers services to patients via local GP Practices, Primary Care Networks and 'At scale' (through Taurus Healthcare). This means that GP services are available to patients 24/7, 365 days a year.

“
Brilliant service,
wonderful team.
Thank you.
(Patient feedback)

728,989

Routine appointments were delivered by practices



41,533

Routine appointments were delivered in evening and weekend clinics run by Taurus Healthcare on behalf of Herefordshire General Practice



546,710

Booked on the day appointments were delivered by practices



2,615

Attendances were delivered through Taurus Overnight Nursing Service



“

Fantastic service, friendly and helpful staff. (Patient feedback)

36,466

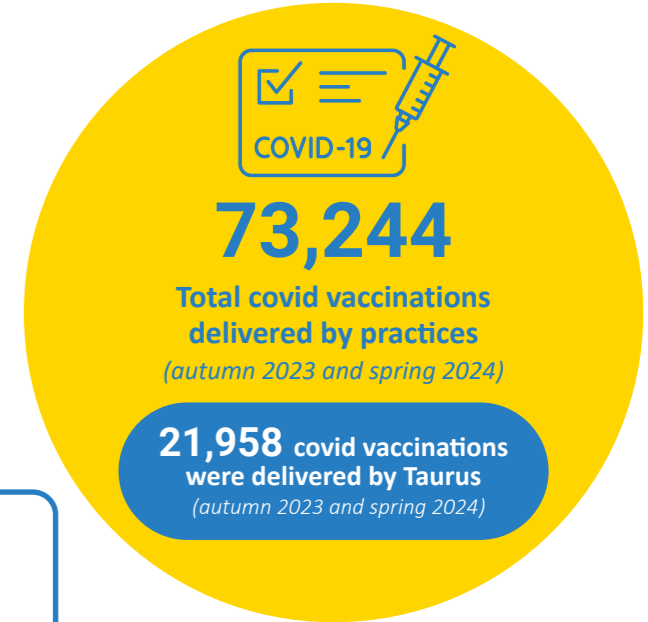


Remote patient consultations were delivered through Taurus Healthcare's Herefordshire Remote Health Service

19,648



Urgent appointments were delivered through the Taurus Out of Hours service



1,685

People were supported through Taurus Healthcare's Talk Wellbeing Service (outreach and Hereford Hub), saving NHS England an estimated **£49,050** through preventative healthcare



114 Patients supported through Taurus Healthcare's Zero Tolerance service (patients who are otherwise excluded from Herefordshire surgeries)

62,279

Seasonal flu vaccinations were delivered by practices



NHS



3,231

NHS Health Checks delivered in practices

1,740 NHS

Health Checks delivered by Taurus Healthcare

How have we delivered to patients this year?

Integration

Urgent Community Response



Wye Valley Trust provide the urgent community response (UCR) service – supporting patients to remain in their usual place of residence in acute crisis, when a hospital admission may not be best for them and can be prevented.

The service runs from 8am to 8pm, seven days a week. Taurus provides GPs into the service to provide assessment and support the community multidisciplinary team. We are shaping the service in an integrated innovative way, with Wye Valley Trust and West Midlands Ambulance Service alongside wider work in the Community Referral Hub.

The service is being relaunched in the autumn of 2024, to strengthen the

clinical model for the urgent community response with both district nursing and GP input.

In the period November 2023 to October 2024, the Community Referral Hub has taken 58,644 calls. This includes nearly 1,200 calls for Urgent Community Response (requiring a solution within two hours) and nearly 2,000 originating from the West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS). In the past six months we know that out of the 2,000 WMAS referrals, over 900 patients were not admitted to hospital following contact with the Hub.

Community Health Hub - Nelson House



In the spring of 2024, we realised a long-term ambition to have our own premises through the purchase of Nelson House on Whitecross Road in Hereford city centre.

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Not only does this provide a great working environment for our team but it also enables us to collaborate on a regular and much wider basis with Herefordshire General Practice and system partners.

The building offers larger meeting rooms, a variety of informal meeting spaces, training facilities and clinical rooms.

The Urgent Community Response service has moved into Nelson House and Herefordshire Healthwatch regularly work from here too. The Out of Hours Urgent GP service will move permanently to the premises from November 2024.

We will be making significant cost savings through consolidating our premises into one location. But perhaps more importantly are the opportunities it gives us for integration and collaboration.



In the past six months, out of 2,000 WMAS referrals, over 900 patients were not admitted to hospital following contact with the Hub.



Picture courtesy of Wye Valley Trust

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How have we delivered to patients this year?

Prevention and tackling inequalities

Talk Wellbeing



First launched in June 2023, the Talk Wellbeing Service provides an outreach prevention programme, supporting health and wellbeing at the heart of communities across the county. It has continued to develop during 2024, expanding the range of services offered and increasing the number of people it is able to support.

Our outreach team work with local Primary Care Networks to identify areas where their work could have greatest impact. They have offered pop-ups across the county, including within agricultural settings, homeless services, community cafes and refugee centres.

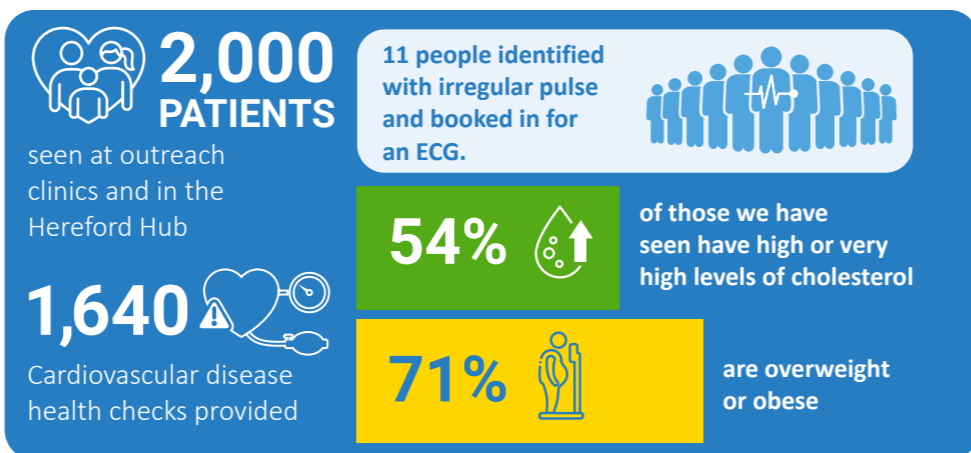
In February 2024, the team were delighted to open the Talk Wellbeing Hub in Maylord Orchards in Hereford City. This pilot created an opportunity to test the concept of 'Health on the

High Street' and to understand if the flexibility of an easily accessible, drop-in service would remove some of the barriers people experience in accessing healthcare. A range of services were offered alongside space for colleagues from other organisations to work and increase their availability. These included voluntary and community sector organisations such as Herefordshire Mind, the Samaritans, Dementia Matters Here(fordshire), the school nursing team, Carer Links, Turning Point, Healthy Lifestyles and Landau Employment Support, to name but a few.

Feedback from patients, staff and colleagues in partner organisations has been hugely positive and we believe 'Health on the High Street' has a role in the future.

We are now also the main delivery partner (working with Herefordshire Council) to bring health checks to key employer locations in the county.

Since the service started:



We have been able to test the 'Health on the High Street' concept and the importance of patients being able to drop-in for healthcare support.

75% of visitors to the Hub were 'passing by'.

60 We have visited over 60 different locations through our outreach work

89% of people are **extremely likely** to recommend the service to friends and family; The remaining **11%** are **likely** to recommend this service to friends and family.

156 The pop-up table space at the Hub has been used 156 times by different organisations, saving them approximately £7,800

130 The Hub 'pods' (consultation rooms) have been booked 130 times by different organisations, saving them approximately £10,400

Hereford City case study

Integrated working to tackle health inequalities



There is a much higher prevalence of smokers in the deprived parts of Hereford city compared with more affluent areas.

Wargrave Belmont and Cantilupe (WBC) Primary Care Network is working closely with the Healthy Lifestyle Trainers who provide smoking cessation support and services. The WBC Wellbeing team has had specific smoking cessation training with the Healthy Lifestyle Trainers and are actively contacting patients who are high risk and smokers to signpost them to services – specifically patients on our asthma and diabetes registers. By working closely with the Healthy Lifestyle Trainers and joining them at weekly drop-ins in South Wye community venues we hope to 'make every contact count'.

The WBC and Hereford Medical Group (HMG) Social Prescribers have built a close working relationship with St Thomas Cantilupe Church of England Primary School in the city. The school

population includes high numbers of children with English as an additional language and serves a community with complex needs. Social Prescribers have attended parents' evenings and sports day, making connections with families, parents, and carers. Families can access social prescribing support, information about vaccinations, smoking cessation and health checks. This has been a joint initiative with Social Prescribers, Healthy Lifestyle Trainers, Talk Wellbeing and the school nursing team. Feedback from the school leadership team has been overwhelmingly positive.

“ Being able to be based in a central location that is easily accessible by people had a huge positive impact on the support we could give. (Stakeholder feedback) ”

How have we delivered to patients this year?

Supporting General Practice resilience

Much Birch Surgery



General practice partnership is facing a challenging time with uncertainty over future funding arrangements within the new structures. More GPs are available, but many are choosing to become salaried rather than partners. This can leave partnerships reducing in size, leading to increased risk and responsibilities for those remaining.

Earlier this year, Much Birch Surgery was facing a precarious situation following the retirement or resignation of all but one of its partners. Despite a two-year campaign, they could not attract new partners to the surgery and were faced with the real prospect of having to close, causing great anxiety to everyone at the practice and patients.

Following discussion with the Integrated Care Board (ICB), the existing partners asked for support from the Federation. Initially help was requested with

management and clinical support, but it became clear that a more permanent solution was required and the existing partners chose to seek novation, which was approved by the ICB. This means that Taurus Healthcare became responsible for delivery of the GMS (General Medical Services) Contract and all the practice team.

The surgery is now run on a day-to-day basis by a senior management team, chaired by a senior representative from Taurus. Additional support is provided by Taurus around quality, clinical governance, finance, payroll, comms, information governance and strategic leadership. The practice, which recently relied on many locum clinicians, now has an entirely salaried GP and nursing workforce.

The transition has been seamless for patients who continue to receive the excellent quality care that they have come to expect from the surgery and any surplus generated supports Herefordshire General Practice.



“
The transition has been seamless for patients who continue to receive the excellent quality care that they have come to expect from the surgery.”

Quality care for patients



This year we are proud of building on our patient safety culture across Herefordshire General Practice and continuing to work with colleagues across One Herefordshire to support a learning environment.

Most practices and Taurus services use Datix to record and manage incidents and share these when they relate to other providers or at the interface between organisations. A strong learning culture has been developed between HGP and the Safety team at Wye Valley Trust.

We meet monthly with One Herefordshire partners in our Safety in Sync discussion and this initiative was nominated for a Patient Safety Award this year.

We have developed a Patient Safety Charter outlining commitments to the patients in our service.

This year we have also worked with practice colleagues to build an online resource to support the demonstration of quality in our care to ensure we are all CQC compliant and to benefit from working in a collaborative way.

Themes and trends are monitored and shared for wider learning and escalation – not only in Herefordshire General Practice but also with local partners such as Wye Valley Trust and West Midlands Ambulance Service.



Financial report

Taurus Healthcare Ltd (as part of HGP)

In line with our aim to deliver a small surplus from our contracted service each year to enable us to support our federative and strategic leadership functions, a summary of our financial functions is shown below:



£m	2022-23	2023-24	Budget 2024-25
Income for services provided	15.9	18.1	19.2
Cost of delivering federative, strategic and contracted services	16.1	18.3	19.1
Funds retained for future developments	(0.2)	(0.2)	0.1

Strategic report for the period ended March 31, 2024

The Directors present their strategic report for the year ended 31 March 2024. The purpose of this strategic report is to highlight areas of importance reported in the accounts and provide a summary of the overall strategic position. The accounts have been prepared in line with the UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (UKGAAP) under the going concern concept that an entity will remain in business for the foreseeable future.

Review of business

Taurus Healthcare Ltd (Taurus) was established in 2012 to support Herefordshire General Practices to work together, supporting delivery of better and more resilient services for patients in Herefordshire. Taurus has since grown significantly into a medium sized company, with a turnover of £18.1 million and expenditure of £18.3 million for the financial year ended 31 March 2024.

During 2023/24, Taurus progressed three significant initiatives to seek to ensure financial resilience and sustainability.

1. The formation of our commercial subsidy, Primary Care Analytics (PCA). To date PCA has progressed well, and we expect a profit for 2024/25.

2. The purchase via novation of the Much Birch General Practice, which would otherwise have closed with patients being dispersed to other practices. All Much Birch employees became Taurus employees and the former partner became salaried, with the practice buildings, furniture and fittings and drug stock being purchased. The practice continues to operate effectively, and the seamless transfer resulting in no difference in service to practice patients.

3. Commencing the purchase of a new base from which to provide a range of clinical services, plus house all corporate employees along with our subsidiary. The Out of Hours (OOH) service will move to be delivered from this new base, which will become an integrated resource with other partners invited to share these premises to seek to join up services. This purchase is expected to deliver financial savings of in excess of £120,000 in a full year and is more cost effective than renting a number of properties. The purchase has completed in 2024/25.

The nature and operational model of Taurus, necessitates balancing levels of profit made with providing services to patients in support of the wider health economy.

Taurus has a balanced and experienced team of Executive and Non-Executive Directors. The Directors have specialist areas of expertise and are appraised on their responsibilities to ensure the company remains sustainable as a going concern. With the governance structure in place, supported by close scrutiny, Taurus is expected to remain in a strong position for the foreseeable future.

The year ahead

Every year I talk about the challenges General Practice is facing - and as I look forward to 2025 these challenges don't seem to be getting any easier.

For the first time since 2010, we have a Labour government in power. One of the new government's first actions upon election was to commission Lord Darzi to undertake an investigation into the state of the NHS. His initial report highlighted the difficulties people are experiencing in getting the care they need – including problems accessing GP services.

Darzi identified some major themes for how to 'repair the NHS', including the need to expand and adapt community services, provide care closer to home and greater integration. These will be fed into a new 10-year health plan, alongside the results of an extensive public consultation now on-going: 'Change NHS'. The results are due to be published in the spring of 2025. The impact on General Practice nationally and locally is likely to be significant but the detail remains to be seen.

Meanwhile, practices are having to deal with the uncertainty around details of the new GMS contract and whether increases to employers' National Insurance contributions will or will not be refunded by Government. As I write, this is causing huge anxiety to practices who are already finding it difficult to make ends meet.

Locally, Herefordshire General Practice is going through a 'reset'. The LMC (Local Medical Committee) is leading a thorough review of the Federation's current activities with representatives from practices across all Herefordshire PCNs. Together they are considering what is currently provided and whether this meets their needs. The outcome of this reset is due in March 2025 and will result in a new model of working for Herefordshire General Practice.

The current Out of Hours Urgent GP contract, operated by Taurus Healthcare on behalf of Herefordshire General Practice, is likely to be recommissioned in 2025 and we look forward to putting forward a strong

bid to retain this work. We are proud that patient feedback on the current Out of Hours service has always been extremely positive. It is also supported by Herefordshire surgeries who value the ability for it to be integrated with other healthcare services to provide a joined-up offer to patients.

We will continue to explore opportunities for 'left shift' with our colleagues at Wye Valley Trust. This means liaising with them to identify ways in which work previously undertaken within the hospital environment may be better carried out in General Practice, in the community or at a Herefordshire-wide level. These discussions aim to reduce system backlog and are already bearing fruit.

I must also highlight the opportunities that our new premises at Nelson House afford us. Our eight new consultation rooms and self-contained clinic area will be used to expand the services we provide.

The meeting rooms, conference and training areas and social spaces provide opportunities for us to work more collaboratively, both with each other and our colleagues from across the system. This can only be a good thing, integrating our services and enabling a joined-up approach to benefit the patients we serve.

Finally, I would like to thank the Federation's team members who work tirelessly every single day of the year to support Herefordshire General Practice and our patients. I would also like to acknowledge our system partners and everyone who works with us and supports us in any way.

Despite all of the challenges, we remain passionate and committed to the vital role General Practice plays within the healthcare system.

Dr Mike Hearne
GP Partner (Fownhope Medical Centre) and MD of Taurus Healthcare Federation



Senior executives from Taurus and the ICB with Matthew Taylor from the NHS Confederation (centre)

Our Board



Dr Nigel Fraser
Chairman



Dr Mike Hearne
Managing Director



Dr Lauren Parry (non-voting)
Medical Director



Dr Edward Conquest
Executive Director
Representing North &
West practices



Dr Paul Harris
Executive Director
Representing Wargrave, Belmont
and Cantilupe practices



Kerry Mills
Executive Director
Representing Hereford Medical Group



Dr Verity Wilkins
Executive Director
Representing East practices



Graeme Walker
Non-Executive Director



Jill Pritchard
Non-Executive Director



Dr Richard Warner
Non-Executive Director



Andrew Lee (non-voting)
Director of Finance



Nisha Sankey (non-voting)
Director of Integrated Services



Donna Vickers (non-voting)
Director of Delivery and Planning



Despite all of the challenges, we remain passionate and committed to the vital role General Practice plays within the healthcare system.



Herefordshire General Practice

Taurus Healthcare



Providing NHS services

Proud to be part of



**Herefordshire
and Worcestershire**
Integrated Care System

Taurus Healthcare

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