

BOARD PAPER - NHS ENGLAND

Title:

A Healthy NHS Workforce: Report on the Programme Launch and Contents.

Lead Director:

Ian Dodge, National Director for Commissioning Strategy.

Purpose of Paper:

- Inform the Board about the proposals to develop a healthy NHS workforce.

The Board is invited to:

- Consider and welcome the launch of the programme; and to note our dual role of providing national leadership and support, and delivering the same offer to our own staff.

A Healthy NHS Workforce: Report on the Programme Launch and Contents

NHS England Board – 24 September 2015

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The *Five Year Forward View* made a commitment ‘to ensure the NHS as an employer sets a national example in the support it offers its own staff to stay healthy’.
- 1.2 Estimates from Public Health England put the cost to the NHS of staff absence due to poor health at £2.4bn a year – around £1 in every £40 of the total budget. This figure excludes the cost of agency staff to fill in gaps, as well as the cost of treatment.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The new initiative has three pillars:
- i. first, a major drive for **improved NHS staff health**, spearheaded by a group of leading NHS hospital, mental health, ambulance, community and clinical commissioning group employers, in partnership with NHS Employers and Public Health England;
 - ii. second, a new **nationally-specified occupational health service for GPs** suffering from burnout and stress, in partnership with the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) and British Medical Association (BMA) General Practitioners Committee; and
 - iii. third, **national action** by NHS England working with Public Health England and other agencies to challenge and support catering contractors and Public Finance Initiative (PFI) providers to raise the standards of food and nutrition.

Pillar One - leading NHS employers to spearhead comprehensive initiative to boost NHS staff health at work

- 2.2 Staff ill-health and related absence is linked to an increased risk of unsafe care, worse experiences of care for patients and poorer outcomes (Boorman, 2009). The annual NHS staff survey also reveals big differences between organisations in how their employees say they are supported at work. This includes creating a positive working environment that listens to frontline staff, tackles bullying and discrimination, reduces stress and promotes health and positive mental wellbeing.
- 2.3 Ten local NHS organisations (listed in Appendix A) and NHS England itself, collectively employing around 55,000 staff, have agreed to lead implementation of this new programme. All participating organisations have committed to six key actions:
- i. providing the **NHS health check at work** for NHS staff aged 40 or over – so that staff are able to access it more easily, and receive local signposting and support, while testing new models of health assessments and health-related incentives;
 - ii. providing **specific capacity for staff** to access physiotherapy and mental health talking therapies, as well as smoking cessation and weight management services;
 - iii. ensuring patients and staff are always offered **healthy options** in restaurants, cafes and vending machines on site, and actively promoting healthier options through targeted promotions;
 - iv. establishing and promoting a **local physical activity ‘offer’** to staff, such as running yoga classes, Zumba classes, or competitive sports teams, and promoting healthy travel to work by offering the Cycle to Work scheme;
 - v. fully implementing Public Health England’s **Workplace Wellbeing Charter** (www.wellbeingcharter.org.uk) assessment and accreditation process, fully implementing the NICE guidelines on workplace health; and
 - vi. identifying a **Board level director lead** and **senior clinician** to champion this work, while providing **training to all line managers** to help them support their staff’s health and wellbeing.

- 2.4 With these ten organisations, and our national partners, our intention is to develop and refine a simple standard core offer, capable of being adapted for local context, and adopted across all NHS employers over the next five years.
- 2.5 The initiative draws on the important work done by Dame Carol Black, Chair of the Nuffield Trust and a government advisor on health and work, in this area. Dame Carol will also play a role in helping drive progress together with national bodies and the leading network of local NHS employers.

Pillar Two - new nationally-specified occupational health service for GPs suffering from burnout and stress

- 2.6 Increasing pressures in general practice are one of the reasons why GPs leave the profession. Occupational health services are available across the whole of England but with varying levels of follow-up services depending on local commissioning arrangements by Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs).
- 2.7 NHS England will therefore develop a national service specification for procurement regionally from April 2016. It will be supported by specialist services for doctors building on those which have been successfully developed in areas such as:
 - i. the London Practitioner Health Programme, funded by CCGs in and around London;
 - ii. House Concern, a specialist service in north east England;
 - iii. Somerset Clinician Support Service, and;
 - iv. MedNet, a service provided by South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust and the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust.

Pillar Three - national action to challenge and support catering contractors and PFI providers to raise the standards of food and nutrition

- 2.8 NHS England will meet the major hospital catering vendors and PFI contractors to discuss how to ensure that the NHS leads the way in offering healthy food to its staff and patients.
- 2.9 There is much that can be done within existing contracts to provide healthier choices for staff, and some Trusts have already shown what is possible by promoting healthy options (e.g. including fruit rather than confectionary in discounted meal deals) and working to reshape their overall offer.
- 2.10 NHS England is clear that it is unacceptable for health sector organisations to be contracting with caterers who mainly sell foods that do not meet nutritional standards or actively promote unhealthy eating. Officials will work with organisations to ensure that they are providing easily understandable nutritional information and appropriate portion sizes, building on the Government Food Buying Standards to ensure a healthy and sustainable food and drink offer. Food and drink offered in vending machines should also meet existing nutritional standards.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 In developing the proposals further, NHSE will devise costed plans for delivery of the three pillars for further review. The Board is invited to consider and welcome the launch of the programme; and to note our dual role of providing national leadership and support, and delivering the same offer to our own staff.

Author: Ian Dodge, National Director – Commissioning Strategy
Date: September 2015

Organisations Leading Implementation of the Healthy Workforce Programme

- Birmingham Children's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Bradford District Care NHS Foundation Trust
- The Hurley Group, London
- Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust
- Rotherham CCG
- University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust
- The Walton Centre NHS Foundation Trust
- West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust
- York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust