

**MINUTES OF A PUBLIC MEETING IN COMMON OF THE BOARDS OF NHS  
ENGLAND AND NHS IMPROVEMENT HELD ON THURSDAY 28 JANUARY 2021 AT  
12. NOON BY VIDEO CONFERENCE**

**Members:**

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**NHS Improvement**

Sir Andrew Morris	Vice Chair
Sir David Behan	Associate Non-Executive Director
Lord Patrick Carter of Coles	Non-Executive Director
Dr Tim Ferris	Non-Executive Director
Wol Kolade	Non-Executive Director
Professor Sir Munir Pirmohamed	Non-Executive Director

**NHS England**

Lord David Prior	Chair
Michael Coupe	Non-Executive Director
Lord Ara Darzi of Denham	Non-Executive Director
Ian Dodge	National Director for Primary Care, Community Services and Strategy (non-voting member)
Susan Kilsby	Non-Executive Director
Rakesh Kapoor	Non-Executive Director
Emily Lawson	Chief Commercial Officer (non-voting member)
Sir Simon Stevens	Chief Executive Officer
David Roberts	Vice Chair
Jeremy Townend	Non-Executive Director
Laura Wade-Gery	Non-Executive Director

**Joint members**

Julian Kelly	Chief Financial Officer
Ruth May	Chief Nursing Officer
Amanda Pritchard	Chief Operating Officer/Chief Executive Officer NHS Improvement
Professor Stephen Powis	National Medical Director

**In attendance:**

Sofia Bernsand	Head of Governance
Simon Enright	Director of Communications
Prerana Issar	Chief People Officer
Ninjeri Pandit	Director of the Office of NHS Chairs, CEO and COO
Clare Perry	Senior Business Manager to the Chairs
Pauline Philip	National Director for Emergency and Elective Care

**1. Welcome and apologies**

- 1.1. Apologies for absence had been received from Baroness Dido Harding (Chair, NHS Improvement) and Noel Gordon (Non-Executive Director, NHS England).
- 1.2. On behalf of the Board, the Chair of NHS England thanked Sir Simon Stevens as well as other Executives for their excellent personal leadership in the NHS' response to the pandemic.

**2. Declarations of interest**

2.1. No declarations of interest were raised over and above those held on record.

### **3. Minutes from the meetings held on 26 November 2020 (BM/21/01(Pu))**

3.1. The minutes from the meetings held on 26 November 2020 were approved.

### **4. Chief Executive's Report (verbal update)**

4.1. The Chief Executive, Sir Simon Stevens, provided an update on the latest position on COVID-19 hospital inpatients across England, noting that it was one year ago this coming Saturday, the 30 January 2020, since the World Health Organisation declared the outbreak of COVID-19 to be a public health emergency. In response, the NHS had moved its National Incident Level up to level 4, the highest level of incident preparedness. A reflection on the last year was provided and the Chief Executive and his colleagues paid tribute to the extraordinary work carried out by staff across the health service since the start of the pandemic.

4.2. The increase in pressures since the last Board meeting were noted. The number of COVID-19 positive inpatients being treated in hospitals in the preceding three months exceeded the peak of the first wave of the pandemic. An overview of five key actions that had been taken to prepare for a second wave of COVID-19 infections was provided. These were: (a) investment to expand and flex facilities and equipment, so as for example to increase critical care surge capacity in acute hospitals, implement IPC green/blue separate pathways, and upgrade 159 Emergency departments; (b) increase the number of whole time equivalent staff across the NHS up by 46,000 over the past year; (c) expand partnerships with others to increase effective capacity, including with hospices and the independent sector; (d) research and deploy new therapies and treatments for COVID; and (e) take advantage of the reduction in COVID inpatients over Summer and early Autumn to significantly expand non-COVID services and tackle elective care backlogs. The increase in critically ill COVID-19 patients and the additional 32,000 patients that were being treated for non COVID-19 illnesses meant that the NHS continued to be under enormous pressure. Looking ahead, these pressures were likely to continue for some time and it would therefore be imperative to reduce the infection rates and continue to vaccinate as many people as possible.

4.3. Progress made by the COVID-19 vaccination programme was noted and an overview of initiatives to support staff and increase recruitment of nurses was provided.

### **5. Operational and financial performance update (BM/21/02(Pu))**

5.1. The Chief Operating Officer introduced the reports and provided an overview of operational performance of the NHS. The pressures on services in providing ongoing COVID-19 response work whilst also caring for non COVID-19 patients was highlighted.

- 5.2. A summary of actions taken to support the NHS through the latest wave of COVID-19 infections and winter pressures was provided. Initiatives to support staff, increase the workforce and build on mutual aid arrangements put in place during the first wave were noted.
- 5.3. An update on elective care was provided. Continuing efforts were being made to maintain cancer treatment levels and positive progress had been made in relation to diagnostic test and day care activity. Trusts were also continuing to work with Independent Sector providers to ensure capacity is made available and utilised effectively to maximise capacity and treat patients. Ongoing work was taking place to address the increase in demand for mental health services.
- 5.4. The National Director for Emergency and Elective Care provided an update on initiatives to support and improve Urgent and Emergency Care, highlighting the positive impact of transformation and innovation. An overview of initiatives put in place to improve safe discharge was provided. The need to ensure that innovations and initiatives are embedded into the future operation and NHS service offerings was highlighted, noting the importance of ensuring these also focused on addressing health inequalities.
- 5.5. The Chief Financial Officer provided an update on the NHS financial position as at month 8 of 2020/21 and noted that an additional £9.7 billion had been spent over and beyond the original mandate from Government. Aggregate level of spend had remained consistent and reflected the additional expenditure incurred by the NHS to respond to the pandemic as well as loss of planned activity. An update on capital expenditure was also provided.
- 5.6. It was noted that operational planning had been suspended for the first part of 2021/22 pending agreement with Government on additional COVID funding.

## **6. COVID-19 vaccination deployment (BM/21/04/(Pu))**

- 6.1. In her capacity as the Senior Responsible Officer for the COVID-19 Vaccine Deployment, the Chief Commercial Officer provided an update on the COVID-19 vaccine deployment programme. Tribute was paid to everyone involved in the programme and it was noted that by 15 February 2021 everyone in the top four priority cohorts, as per the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation guidance, will have received an invitation to have the vaccine.
- 6.2. A discussion took place on concerns around vaccine uptake across minority ethnic groups and other communities. Initiatives taking place to reduce vaccine hesitancy and increase uptake in all communities and address health inequalities were considered. The importance of using and sharing data to track and monitor uptake by priority cohorts and groups to improve the understanding of vaccine hesitancy and encourage uptake was emphasised.

6.3. In his capacity as a member of the panel of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), Sir Munir Pirmohamed provided a summary of the rationale for changing the vaccination schedule for administering second doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccines.

**7. Any other business**

7.1. There was no other business.

**Close**