

**MINUTES OF A PUBLIC MEETING IN COMMON OF THE BOARDS OF NHS  
ENGLAND AND NHS IMPROVEMENT HELD ON THURSDAY 25 MARCH 2021 AT 2  
PM BY VIDEO CONFERENCE**

**Members:**

---

**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
Dr 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

**NHS Improvement**

Sir Andrew Morris	Acting 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 (to agenda item 10.2)

**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
Dr Simon Eccles	Deputy CEO, NHSX
Simon Enright	Director of Communications
Dr Aidan Fowler	National Director of Patient Safety
Prerana Issar	Chief People Officer
Sarah-Jane Marsh	Maternity Transformation Programme Board Chair and Chief Executive Officer of Birmingham Women's and Children's Hospital
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 during her leave of absence

- 1.2. The Chair of NHS England noted that this was Noel Gordon's last Board meeting and on behalf of the Boards thanked him for his contribution to the NHS and the organisations.

## **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 28 January 2021 (BM/21/05(Pu))**

- 3.1. The minutes from the meetings held on 28 January 2021 were approved.

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

- 4.1. The Chief Executive, Sir Simon Stevens, introduced the update and noted the sad and untimely death of Dr Clifford Mann, the NHS National Clinical Advisor for Accident and Emergency Care.
- 4.2. An update on the latest position on COVID-19 admissions across England was provided, noting the continuing decrease in COVID-positive inpatients, the decline in community infection rates and the beneficial impact of the NHS COVID-19 vaccination programme. As the number of patients in hospital being treated for COVID-19 had been steadily reducing, with immediate effect the NHS would stepdown its National Incident Level from level 4 (national) to level 3 (regional).
- 4.3. It was noted that subject to approval at this meeting, the NHS Operational Planning guidance for 2021/22 will shortly be published. The Government had also issued its 2021/22 mandate to NHS England and NHS Improvement. An overview of funding for 2021/22 was provided and it was noted that every part of England was now covered by an Integrated Care System (ICS).
- 4.4. Several Non-Executive Directors reflected on the past year and challenges ahead. The importance of the future vaccination strategy, digital transformation and supporting staff whilst ensuring recovery of services and transformational change
- 4.5. On behalf of the Board, the Chair of NHS England thanked Sir Simon Stevens and his Executives for their leadership and response to the pandemic.

## **5. COVID-19 vaccination deployment (BM/21/06(Pu))**

- 5.1. In her capacity as the Senior Responsible Officer for COVID-19 Vaccine Deployment, the Chief Commercial Officer provided an update and set out the proposed approach for the next phases of delivery.
- 5.2. An overview of work taking place with communities to increase vaccine acceptance was provided. A discussion also took place on the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation's priority list for adults aged under 50, noting that considerable work was taking place to further enhance vaccine confidence and uptake

- 5.3. Sir Munir Pirmohamed provided an overview of the safety and efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccines. Work to consider the potential delivery of a third booster dose at the same time as the winter flu vaccine was noted.

## **6. NHS COVID-19 response (BM/21/07(Pr))**

- 6.1. The National Medical Director introduced the report, which provided an overview of the work that the NHS had undertaken to prepare for and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 6.2. A summary of the approach to wave one and wave two was provided, highlighting the extraordinary response by NHS colleagues, the wider care sector and members of the public. Clinical and operational innovations were discussed, noting the collaboration between the NHS and researchers that led to the first successful treatment to reduce mortality from COVID-19 and the recruitment of over 1 million NHS patients into clinical research and COVID-19 studies.
- 6.3. Board Members paid tribute to everyone across the NHS and highlighted the importance of capturing learnings from the pandemic to inform the recovery and, where appropriate, transformation of services.

## **7. NHS Operational and financial performance (BM/21/08(Pu))**

- 7.1. The Chief Operating Officer introduced the reports and provided an overview of operational performance of the NHS, noting the increase in demand on services in the last quarter, particularly during January when the number of patients being treated for COVID-19 was at its peak. The reported decrease in the number of COVID-19 inpatients and the plans being developed to increase non-COVID services in light of this were noted.
- 7.2. An update on elective care, NHS 111 and NHS 111 First was provided. The increase in the number of emergency admissions was noted.
- 7.3. An update on the increase in demand for mental health services was provided and the emerging pressure on child and adolescent inpatient mental health beds was highlighted.
- 7.4. The Chief Financial Officer provided an update on the NHS financial position as at month 10 of 2020/21, noting that an additional £12 billion had needed to be spent over and above the original mandate. Month 10 expenditure was slightly higher than the average run-rate for the first 9 months of the year. This was largely due to the increase in expenditure on the COVID-19 vaccination programme. An update on capital expenditure was also provided.

## **8. NHS Operational Planning Guidance 2021/22 (BM/21/09(Pu))**

- 8.1. The Chief Financial Officer introduced the report and provided an overview of the priorities set out in the Operational Planning guidance for 2021/22, highlighting the collaboration that had taken place in the drafting of the guidance. An overview of the financial settlement agreed by the Government for the NHS for the first half of

year was provided, noting that £8.1 billion above the original mandate had been secured for additional COVID-19 costs during the first part of 2021/22.

- 8.2. The Boards welcomed the guidance, the approach the NHS would be taking to recovery of services, the continuation of clinical and operational innovations that had been introduced since the start of the pandemic and, , the additional support for staff. The importance of addressing capacity and workforce challenges was emphasised.

**RESOLVED:**

- 8.3. The Boards approved the publication of the 2021/22 Operational Planning guidance.

**9. Consultation on a new NHS System Oversight Framework for 2021/22 (BM/21/10(Pu))**

- 9.1. The Chief Operating Officer introduced the item and provided an overview of the key elements of the proposed approach to NHS oversight for 2021/22.
- 9.2. The Boards considered the proposed framework, noting that it will align oversight of NHS Providers , clinical commissioning groups and ICSs. The new oversight arrangements will be based around five national themes aligned to the NHS Long Term Plan: quality of care; access and outcomes; preventing ill health and reducing inequalities; people; finance and use of resources; and leadership and capability. An additional, sixth oversight theme will be agreed locally and will reflect each local populations' distinctive health needs and priorities. It was also noted that the special measures regime for providers will be replaced with a new national recovery support programme (the RSP).
- 9.3. A discussion took place on the benefits of end to end delivery and the importance of data sharing in enabling population health management.

**RESOLVED:**

- 9.4. The Boards endorsed the proposed approach and approved the publication of the NHS System Oversight Framework for 2021/22 for public consultation.

**10. Supporting NHS staff – initial actions (BM/21/11(Pu))**

- 10.1. The Chief People Officer introduced the report, which outlined actions being taken to support NHS staff health and wellbeing and recovery from the pandemic.
- 10.2. An overview of the national health and wellbeing support service, the principles of recovery and interventions to support staff was provided. Continued efforts were also being made to provide mental health and wellbeing support to critical care staff and their supporting teams and over 400 critical care nursing staff have been registered to be trained as facilitators of restorative supervision to their own colleagues and teams.
- 10.3. In his capacity as the Chair of Health Education England, David Behan highlighted the positive collaboration that had taken place between key stakeholders and

arm's length bodies at national, regional and local levels to ensure support is available to staff and employers. This collaboration had also extended to areas such as workforce supply, retention and recruitment.

10.4. Board members welcomed the approach to the recovery support offerings and emphasised the importance of ensuring this work is embedded into the longer-term approach to staff health and wellbeing.

10.5. An update on the Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) 2020-2021 was also provided.

## **11. Maternity services (BM/21/12(Pu))**

11.1. The Chief Nursing Officer and the National Director of Patient Safety introduced the item and thanked Donna Ockenden for her review of maternity services at Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust (the Trust) (the Ockenden Review) and the families who, under very difficult circumstances, have come forward with their concerns.

11.2. The background to the Ockenden Review was provided and it was noted that the interim report was a practical and clinically focused report containing a large number of recommendations for the Trust to address and seven immediate and essential actions to be implemented by all maternity services in England. In addition to the seven actions, twelve urgent clinical priorities had been identified and all maternity services had been asked to complete an assurance exercise and confirm compliance with the seven immediate and essential actions. The ongoing support provided to the Trust was noted.

11.3. The role of the Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch (HSIB) in investigating safety issues across the NHS was discussed and the Boards noted that HSIB was not in operation at the time the majority of the issues at the Trust were occurring.

11.4. An overview was provided of the Maternity Transformation Programme and the changes planned to strengthen the approach to this work.

11.5. Sarah-Jane Marsh, in her capacity as the chair of the Maternity Transformation Programme Board, provided an overview of improvements made to maternity services during the last five years, highlighting in particular progress made in relation to stillbirths, neonatal and maternal mortality. Further work is in hand in relation to maternity workforce, culture and leadership as well as strengthening the surveillance of providers. An overview of the allocation of the additional £96.5 million of funding for maternity services was provided.

11.6. The Deputy CEO of NHSX provided an overview of digital transformation of maternity services and plans to accelerate delivery of digital maternity care records by 2023/24, ensuring, among other things, that every women has access to their own maternity records and pathways.

11.7. The Board discussed the leadership and culture challenges at some maternity providers and noted that Board level maternity champions, culture tools and tailored improvement plans had been implemented as part of a number initiatives

to improve each maternity service. Considerable efforts were also being made to improve local awareness of 'what good looks like'.

- 11.8. Initiatives to address inequalities amongst women from BAME backgrounds were considered, noting the introduction of Continuity of Carer, involving teams of midwives with a named obstetrician taking responsibility for a defined group of women.

**12. NHS England and NHS Improvement staff survey (BM/21/16(Pu))**

- 12.1. The Boards noted the report, which provided a high-level overview of the results of the November 2020 NHS England and NHS Improvement staff survey, which showed further important gains.

**13. NHS England and NHS Improvement 19% black, Asian and minority ethnic goal progress (BM/21/17(Pu))**

- 13.1. The Boards noted the report, which provided an update on positive progress towards NHS England's and NHS Improvement's goal for 19% black, Asian and minority ethnic staff representation at all levels across the organisations by 2025.

**14. Presenting of NHS England, Monitor and NHS TDA 2019/20 annual report and accounts (BM/21/13(Pu))**

- 14.1. The Boards noted the reports, which confirmed the laying of the 2019/20 Annual Reports and Accounts for NHS England, NHS Trust Development Authority and Monitor and endorsed the timetable for the production of the 2020/21 annual report and accounts. The Department of Health and Social Care's assessment of the organisations was also noted.

**15. Human trafficking and modern slavery statement (BM/21/14(Pu))**

- 15.1. The Boards noted and approved the 2020/21 Slavery and Human Trafficking statement for publication on the NHS England/Improvement website.

**16. Annual Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response (EPRR) Assurance Report (BM/21/15(Pu))**

The Boards endorsed the report.

**17. Any other business**

- 17.1. There was no other business.

**Close**