

**MINUTES OF A PUBLIC MEETING IN COMMON OF THE BOARDS OF NHS ENGLAND AND NHS IMPROVEMENT HELD ON THURSDAY 30 SEPTEMBER 2021 AT 2.45 PM BY VIDEO CONFERENCE**

**Members:**

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**NHS England**

Lord David Prior	Chair
Michael Coupe	Non-Executive Director
Ian Dodge	National Director for Primary Care, Community Services and Strategy (non-voting member)
Amanda Pritchard	Chief Executive Officer
Jeremy Townsend	Non-Executive Director
Laura Wade-Gery	Non-Executive Director

**NHS Improvement**

Baroness Dido Harding	Chair
Sir Andrew Morris	Vice Chair
Sir David Behan	Associate Non-Executive Director
Wol Kolade	Non-Executive Director
Professor Stephen Powis	Chief Executive Officer NHS Improvement

**Joint members**

Mark Cubbon	Interim Chief Operating Officer
Dr Tim Ferris	Non-Executive Director (non-voting member)
Julian Kelly	Chief Financial Officer
Ruth May	Chief Nursing Officer
Professor Stephen Powis	National Medical Director

**In attendance:**

Sofia Bernsand	Head of Board Governance
Simon Bolton	Interim CEO, NHS Digital
Nicholas Hodgetts	Freedom to Speak Up Guardian
Prerana Issar	Chief People Officer
Barnabas Leavers	Office of NHS Chairs, CEO and COO
Clare Perry	Senior Business Manager to the Chairs
Pauline Philip	National Director for Emergency and Elective Care
Ann Radmore	Regional Director for East of England and Executive Lead for Freedom to Speak Up (for agenda item 7)
Gary Slegg	Freedom to Speak Up Guardian
Professor Sir Keith Willett	Senior Responsible Officer for the COVID-19 Vaccine Deployment
Nick Watts	Chief Sustainability Officer

**1. Welcome and apologies**

- 1.1. Apologies for absence had been received from Lord Patrick Carter of Coles (Non-Executive Director, NHS Improvement), Lord Ara Darzi of Denham (Non-Executive Director, NHS England), Rakesh Kapoor (Non-Executive Director, NHS England), Susan Kilsby (Non-Executive Director, NHS England) and Professor Sir Munir Pirmohamed (Non-Executive Director, NHS Improvement).

1.2. The Chair of NHS England welcomed Amanda Pritchard to her first meeting as the Chief Executive of NHS England.

## **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 24 June 2021 (BM/21/23(Pu))**

3.1. The minutes from the NHS England and NHS Improvement Board meetings held on 24 June 2021 were approved.

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

- 4.1. The NHS Chief Executive, introduced the update and thanked Board Members for their support during her first couple of months in her new role.
- 4.2. The unprecedented pressures on services and positive achievements delivered during the summer were noted. This included the launch of the NHS-Galleri Trial, which will look at the effectiveness of the Galleri blood test in detecting more than 50 types of cancer before symptoms appear; a first in Europe access deal for Sotorasib, which will initially be offered to a cohort of NHS lung cancer patients; the roll out of heart checks in community pharmacies, Inclisiran jabs to lower cholesterol and genetic testing to spot a rare form of diabetes. The next phase of the COVID-19 vaccination programme has been launched and the number of deaths and hospital admissions that the vaccination programme has prevented to date was highlighted. The enormous amount of work that had taken place across the NHS to deliver these improvements and programmes was acknowledged and the Chief Executive thanked colleagues across the NHS for their continued dedication and hard work.
- 4.3. An update on work on restoring services was provided, highlighting progress made in elective treatments, key diagnostic tests and urgent cancer checks. Primary care activity and its support in delivering the COVID-19 vaccination programme were also highlighted.
- 4.4. The publication of the planning guidance, which sets out the finance and contracting arrangements for the second half of 2021/22, was noted. An overview of some of the priorities for the next six months was provided, highlighting the continued focus on elective care, cancer treatments, access to primary care, the expanded role of community pharmacies, addressing ambulance handover delays and reducing waiting times in accident and emergency departments. The increase in demand for ambulance services and Urgent and Emergency Care admissions was highlighted and pressures going into the winter season were also noted.
- 4.5. The latest position on COVID-19 infection rates across England was considered, noting the number of hospital inpatients being treated for COVID-19.
- 4.6. The Chief Executive paid tribute to the diverse NHS workforce and highlighted the importance of continuing to support and ensure investment in staff health and wellbeing. The very concerning issue of violence and abuse against NHS staff was

highlighted, and the Chief Executive encouraged staff to report incidents to the police where appropriate. A discussion took place on workforce and Board Members reiterated the importance of supporting NHS staff, the benefits of a diverse workforce and the enormous value of the equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives.

- 4.7. The Chief Executive also welcomed progress made by the NHS in delivering its planned cut in carbon emissions.
- 4.8. The National Director of Transformation reflected on his first few months in post, highlighting the aspiration by the NHS as a whole to be innovative and strive to deliver better care for patients. It was agreed that an update on innovation should be provided to the next meeting.

**ACTION: TF**

## **5. NHS operational performance update (BM/21/24(Pu))**

- 5.1. The Interim Chief Operating Officer introduced the reports and provided an overview of operational performance of the NHS, noting the number of patients in hospital being treated for COVID-19 and the increase in demand for critical care. As the NHS remains at an emergency preparedness, resilience and response (EPRR) level 3 incident level, NHS England/NHS Improvement continue to work closely with colleagues and systems to ensure continued safe care to patients and restoration of services.
- 5.2. The National Director for Emergency and Elective Care provided an overview of challenges in Urgent and Emergency Care, highlighting pressures resulting from capacity constraints, the impact of infection prevention and control (IPC) measures and staff absences. The implementation of a comprehensive recovery of services plan was noted. An update on elective recovery activity was also provided, highlighting initiatives to transform elective care.
- 5.3. The Senior Responsible Officer for COVID-19 Vaccine Deployment provided an update on the COVID-19 vaccination programme. To date 77 million total vaccinations had been administered, with over 48 million first doses and 44 million second doses. For the most at-risk, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) cohorts 1 to 9, 90.3% have received a vaccine. In line with JCVI guidance, everyone aged 16 and above is now able to receive the vaccination and the UK's Chief Medical Officer advised that all children aged 12 to 15 across the UK will be offered one dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID vaccine. The operational complexity in delivering the COVID-19 vaccination programme was highlighted. Members of the public were reminded of the 'evergreen' offer to those who had not yet received a COVID-19 vaccine.
- 5.4. The COVID-19 booster programme had commenced and in line with the recommendation from JCVI, eligible members of the public will be invited to receive a booster jab no earlier than six months after their second vaccine dose. The vaccination programme for immunosuppressed patient's third dose has also commenced. Initiatives taking place to encourage uptake of the booster jab in all communities were also considered.

- 5.5. The National Medical Director provided an update on flu and the potential risk of a challenging winter flu season, emphasising the importance of the COVID-19 vaccine booster and flu vaccination programmes. A discussion took place on the co-administration of the COVID-19 booster and flu vaccine, noting that this is offered to patients where appropriate.
- 5.6. The continued increase in demand for mental health services and pressures on child and adolescent inpatient mental health beds were highlighted and continue to be areas of focus.
- 5.7. The Chief Financial Officer provided an update on the NHS financial position as at month 4 of 2020/21, highlighting the additional funding for the second half of the year for areas including hospital discharge, mental health and elective recovery. A discussion took place on the importance of continued funding to address workforce challenges and support the retention of the existing workforce and initiatives to develop the future workforce supply chain. Board Members also stressed the need to ensure investment in digital technology to realise changes and efficiencies required to NHS services.

## **6. A Net Zero NHS – one year progress update (BM/21/25(Pr))**

- 6.1. The Chief Sustainability Officer introduced the item and highlighted that in October last year the NHS became the world's first national health service to commit to a net zero plan, recognising the impact that climate change has on population health. An overview of progress made in the last year to reduce carbon emissions across the NHS was provided.
- 6.2. A large number of trusts had now developed their own localised and internal net zero strategy, and the importance that those strategies are built into the work of Integrated Care Systems was emphasised. An update on work on the commitment by the NHS to no longer purchase from suppliers that do not meet or exceed NHS' commitment to net zero by 2030 was provided. The Non-Executive Directors welcomed progress made to date and an overview of the positive impact the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) will have on the NHS was noted.

## **7. NHS England and NHS Improvement Internal Freedom to Speak Up update (BM/21/26(Pu))**

- 7.1. The National Medical Director introduced the item and reflected on his time as the Executive Lead for internal Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU), highlighting the significant progress made in the last two years in bringing together the FTSU Guardians and processes for NHS England and NHS Improvement and harmonising and strengthening the joint FTSU arrangements. He thanked the Guardians for their continued dedication and commitment and Henrietta Hughes for her contribution during her five-year tenure as the National Guardian for the NHS.
- 7.2. Nicholas Hodgetts and Gary Slegg, FTSU Guardians, provided an overview of their experience as Guardians. The increase in the number of Guardians, the number of speaking up cases, progress made in promoting FTSU activity, the

established regular interaction with Executives and the continued support by the Non-Executive Directors were highlighted.

7.3. The Regional Director for East of England outlined her priorities as the new FTSU Executive Lead, noting that the recommendations from the FTSU Guardians will underpin the priorities to be delivered in the next twelve months. The importance of continuing to build on work to create a more open culture and develop the senior leadership approach was emphasised.

7.4. Board Members welcomed progress made and a discussion took place on ensuring that the organisations continue to build on the 'listening' aspects of the FTSU process and work towards improving the culture across the organisation.

## **8. The 2020/21 end-of-year Mandate Assurance report (BM/21/27(Pu))**

8.1. The Boards noted the report, which set out the details of the assessment of NHS England/Improvement's performance against the mandate objectives for 2020/21.

## **9. NHS England Complaints Policy (BM/21/28(Pu))**

9.1. The NHS England Board noted and approved the revised NHS England complaints policy.

## **10. Any other business**

10.1. The Chair of NHS England noted that this was Baroness Dido Harding's last meeting as Chair of NHS Improvement and on behalf of both Boards thanked her for her contribution to the organisations and the NHS.

**Close**