

**MINUTES OF A PUBLIC MEETING IN COMMON OF THE BOARDS OF NHS  
ENGLAND AND NHS IMPROVEMENT HELD ON THURSDAY 27 JANUARY 2022  
AT 2 PM BY VIDEO CONFERENCE**

**Members:**

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**NHS England**

Lord David Prior	Chair
Michael Coupe	Non-Executive Director
Lord Ara Darzi of Denham	Non-Executive Director
Rakesh Kapoor	Non-Executive Director
Susan Kilsby	Non-Executive Director
Amanda Pritchard	Chief Executive Officer
Jeremy Townsend	Non-Executive Director
Laura Wade-Gery	Non-Executive Director

**NHS Improvement**

Sir Andrew Morris	Chair
Sir David Behan	Associate Non-Executive Director
Lord Patrick Carter of Coles	Non-Executive Director
Wol Kolade	Non-Executive Director
Dame Julia Goodfellow	Non-Executive Director
Professor Stephen Powis	Chief Executive Officer, NHS Improvement

**Joint members**

Sir David Sloman	Chief Operating Officer
Ruth May	Chief Nursing Officer
Professor Stephen Powis	National Medical Director

**In attendance**

Sofia Bernsand	Head of Board Governance
Mark Cubbon	Chief Delivery Officer
Ian Dodge	National Director for Primary Care, Community Services and Strategy
Dr Tim Ferris	Director of Transformation
Katherine Ibbotson	Director of Governance and Legal
Barnabas Leavers	Office of NHS Chairs, CEO and COO
James Lyons	Director of Communications
Clare Perry	Senior Business Manager to the Chairs
Pauline Philip	National Director for Emergency and Elective Care
Jacqui Rock	Chief Commercial Officer
Peter Ridley	Deputy Chief Financial Officer - Operational Finance (deputising for Julian Kelly)
Em Wilkinson-Brice	Acting Chief People Officer

**1. Welcome and apologies**

- 1.1. Apologies for absence had been received from Julian Kelly (Chief Financial Officer) and Professor Sir Munir Pirmohamed (Non-Executive Director, NHS Improvement).

## **2. Declarations of interest**

- 2.1. No declarations of interest were raised over and above those held on record and no conflicts of interest were raised in respect of business covered by the agenda.

## **3. Minutes from the meetings held on 25 November 2021 (BM/22/01(Pu))**

- 3.1. The minutes from the NHS England and NHS Improvement Board meetings held on 25 November 2021 were approved.

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

- 4.1. The NHS Chief Executive introduced the item, highlighting the significant increase in pressures on services that had arisen in response to the COVID-19 Omicron variant. As a result, the NHS had again declared a Level 4 National Incident, the highest level of incident preparedness, on 13 December 2021.
- 4.2. Tribute was paid to colleagues across the NHS, partners and volunteers for their extraordinary work during this latest wave of infection, which included the acceleration of the COVID-19 vaccination booster programme and a large number of co-administered COVID-19 booster and flu vaccines. Progress had also been made through initial phases of the roll out of monoclonal antibodies and antiviral COVID-19 treatments for non-hospitalised patients with COVID-19 in the highest risk groups. To date, the new COVID Medicines Delivery Unit has assessed and treated more than 10,000 people. Since the start of the Omicron wave a number of additional measures had also been introduced to increase capacity, including efforts to discharge medically-fit patients from hospital, expanding the coverage of remote monitoring pathways and the mobilisation of Nightingale 'surge hubs' to provide additional capacity.
- 4.3. The impact of the Omicron variant on staff capacity in both health and social care was considered and it was noted that the reduction in staff capacity and challenges around flow through hospital had resulted in significant additional pressures on urgent and emergency care pathways. This in turn has had an impact on ambulance service capacity and continuing efforts were being made to support and increase capacity for the ambulance service.
- 4.4. The National Medical Director noted that in response to the Omicron variant many system areas had reprioritised services and reallocated resources to, in particular, support the acceleration of the COVID-19 vaccination booster. A letter had now been issued to primary care colleagues asking them to restore routine services, with particular focus on assessments and ongoing management of urgent care, management of symptomatic COVID-19 patients in the community and the continued delivery of the COVID-19 vaccination programme. Members of the public were reminded of the 'evergreen' offer to those who had not yet received a COVID-19 vaccine. Continuing efforts are also being made to encourage uptake of the vaccine in all communities.
- 4.5. The Chief Nursing Officer thanked everyone involved in delivering the COVID-19 vaccines programme for their remarkable achievements to date. The ongoing work that was taking place to support health care colleagues to respond to, and

encourage uptake of the vaccine, in response to the Government's intention to make vaccination a condition of deployment (VCOD), were noted, along with the risk posed to certain individual services should staff in scope not take up the offer by the deadline. The Boards also discussed vaccine innovations and the likely role that vaccines will play in health prevention in the future.

- 4.6. Elective and cancer treatments, including diagnostics, had, wherever possible, continued as a priority throughout winter but nonetheless considerable work will need to take place to restore activity levels across all services and waiting lists.
- 4.7. An update on life sciences was provided and it was noted that by the end of 2021 the NHS in England had concluded a number of deals to secure innovative drugs and healthcare technologies for patients that are either 'world firsts' or 'first in Europe'. These included making Sapropterin available to all phenylketonuria (PKU) patients for the first time, introducing Palforzia to treat peanut allergy and the extension of the licence for Kaftiro to patients with cystic fibrosis.
- 4.8. An overview of priorities and challenges in the months ahead was provided, noting the additional funding to support areas such as additional beds, equipment, surgical hubs and diagnostic services. The recovery ambitions set out in the 2022/23 NHS priorities and operational planning guidance were highlighted, including key enablers such as workforce and the improved use of digital and data.
- 4.9. The ongoing work to support the NHS transitioning to Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) and integrate NHS England/Improvement, Health Education England and NHS Digital to a new organisation better equipped to support ICSs in delivering national and local priorities was highlighted.
- 4.10. The very concerning issue of sexual harassment and abuse against NHS staff was highlighted and it was noted that, together with the Royal Colleges, efforts were being made by the People Directorate to address these concerns. The Chief Executive encouraged anyone who has experienced sexual harassment and abuse in the workplace to come forward and voice their concerns so that appropriate support can be provided to these individuals, and to enable the NHS to respond to the concerns.
- 4.11. On behalf of the Boards, the NHS England Chair thanked the Chief Executive and her team for their continued dedication and hard work to support the system in responding to the ongoing operational pressures and challenges.

## **5. NHS operational performance update (BM/22/02(Pu))**

- 5.1. The Chief Operating Officer introduced the report and provided an overview of the current operational landscape, noting the large number of patients that are still being treated in hospital for COVID-19.
- 5.2. The impact of the Omicron variant on services was considered. The important role that the COVID-19 vaccine has had during the Omicron wave of infections in providing protection against the virus and how this has mitigated demand on critical care services was highlighted. The transmissibility of the variant has however had a substantial impact on staff absences, significant impact on 999 and

NHS 111 First and ambulance service capacity and the ability for many providers to prioritise recovery of elective services.

- 5.3. An update on elective recovery was provided, and the important role that the Elective Recovery Programme will have in supporting systems to increase elective activity was noted. A discussion took place on the continuing significant pressures on urgent and emergency mental health pathways, an increase of 30% in crisis referrals compared to the same period last year, and the Boards welcomed the initiatives to meet both the current and anticipated future increase in demand. The importance of improved collaboration between the NHS and social care, and the role the ICSs will have in supporting this was discussed.
- 5.4. Cancer recovery was considered and members of the public were reminded of the Help Us Help You campaign which encourages anyone with cancer symptoms to come forward.
- 5.5. Progress made by the COVID-19 vaccination deployment programme was considered, noting that as of 20 January 2022 over 112.7 million total vaccinations in England have been administered, including over 43.5 million first doses, 39.9 million second doses and 29.2 million booster/third doses.
- 5.6. Reflections on the pandemic were provided. Board members emphasised the importance of ensuring that innovations introduced during the pandemic that have resulted in improved quality and safety for patients, have benefited the general public and improved conditions for NHS staff are captured and embedded in practices for the future. The willingness of providers to come together and collaboratively address common problems and challenges and the enhanced collaboration between the NHS, other arm's-length bodies and other partners were also highlighted.
- 5.7. The Deputy Chief Financial Officer - Operational Finance provided an update on the NHS financial position as at month 8 of 2020/21, highlighting the forecasted surplus of £1.3 billion for the aggregate provider and commissioner budget. The impact of the Omicron variant on capital schemes and the estimated capital underspend were noted.

## **6. 2022/23 NHS Operational Planning Guidance and financial allocations (BM/22/03(Pu))**

- 6.1. The Deputy Chief Financial Officer - Operational Finance introduced the item, noting that the 2022/23 priorities and operational planning guidance (the Guidance) was published on the 24 December 2021 setting out ten priorities for the NHS in the coming year. This emphasised the need for continued focus on restoration of services, meeting new care demands and reducing the care backlogs that are a direct consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. The timetable for finalising the financial allocations was noted.
- 6.2. The Boards noted the proposed revised financial framework, which will reintroduce the more traditional approach to financial management of NHS resources within system financial allocations, whilst supporting collaboration and allowing systems to take appropriate funding decisions for their populations.

**7. Any other business**

7.1. There was no other business.

**Close**