

# Key comms

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## Social Partnership Forum (SPF) Wider Group

17 March 2022

The meeting was chaired by the minister of state for health, Edward Argar, who was pleased to be able to further engage with the group and thanked the SPF for their work during the pandemic. The minister spoke about the continuous challenges the NHS workforce faces. He further acknowledged the significant pressures that staff are under, and all the work undertaken during the pandemic and to support recovery.

The minister highlighted the Secretary of States' speech on reform from the 8 March, where he flagged the ongoing challenges faced by the NHS and how to address these. Challenges faced were grouped around four key themes:

- prevention
- performance
- personalisation
- people.

People being central to the ability to deliver for the future.

The minister expressed concern about the situation in Ukraine and explained some of the efforts put in to provide support. He highlighted that nine flights of medical assistance had been dispatched from the UK to Ukraine.

### **Amanda Pritchard, NHS England and Improvement (NHSEI) Chief Executive – View from the bridge**

Amanda spoke to the SPF, focusing on recovery and the workforce. She thanked Prerana Issar for her exceptional work as the chief people officer (CPO) in building a positive and inclusive culture in the NHS. Em Wilkinson-Brice has come in to continue that work as interim CPO. Amanda emphasised the significance of the recovery and support for the health and care

workforce and the importance of working collaboratively to achieve this, this included recruitment and retention, different ways of working and investing in the health and wellbeing of staff. She then discussed the elective recovery strategy, which will be focussing on catching up on the work that could not be achieved over the last two years and identifying people with conditions that had not come forward during the pandemic. This scheme sets out the NHS's ambition to deliver:

- Nine million more tests and checks per year by 2025.
- 17 million more diagnostic tests – an increase of a quarter compared to pre-pandemic.
- 100 diagnostic centres will be rolled out.
- More surgical hubs, focusing on high-volume routine surgery so more patients can get seen more quickly.

Amanda further echoed Edward Argar's concern over the events in Ukraine. She explained how the NHS was working with Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and others as part of a national effort to provide support. Finally, she thanked employers and union members for their work to keep people together during the difficult conversations regarding vaccination as a condition of deployment (VCOD) and acknowledged the difficulties this presented.

Sara Gorton, Head of Health, Unison, thanked Amanda for attending and for continuing engagement on the recovery plan. Sara mentioned how pay and reward can be used to assist recovery. Trade union reps said the NHS workforce is exhausted with some staff members leaving, impacting the ability to deliver increased efficiency. Amanda reflected that this is a very good point and the plan will be to implement different ways of working rather than asking already hard-pressed staff to work harder.

## **NHS Covenant**

Hazel Wyton, NHS Employers provided an update on the NHS Covenant, explaining this will build on the support currently available for staff. It will aim to enhance the NHS Constitution and the People Promise. NHS Employers will work in partnership with trade unions to take this forward.

## **HPMA partnership working award winner**

Ashley Hambling and Tony Wright, South-West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Trust presented their initiative which won the 2021 HPMA Partnership Working Award. They expressed how a strong partnership approach during the pandemic led to better decision making, quick remedies and an engaged workforce. The SPF thanked Ashley and Tony for sharing their hard

work in partnership and encouraged this to continue. See their [case study](#), to read more about the award-winning work at South Yorkshire Partnership NHS Trust.

### **Health and care leadership review**

Amber Taylor, DHSC confirmed that the timeframe to report to the Secretary of State is the end of March and publication would be shortly after. The two broad themes were discussed - leadership cultures and behaviours, and creating the infrastructure required for strong leadership and equality of opportunity.

Jon Restell, Chief Executive, MIP suggested this should include managers and leaders across all professional groups. He added that time was required for such change and on top of training and development the environment needed to change for this to succeed. Jon was appreciative of the engagement with trade unions on this piece of work and was confident of its successful implementation.

### **ICS Transition Partnership Group update**

Alan Lofthouse, NHS Staff Side, provided an update on the ICS Transition Partnership Group (TPG) with a focus on the safe transition of staff supported by the HR Framework. Helen Bullers, NHSEI mentioned the importance of strong collaboration on the transition through the TPG. She also highlighted the fantastic monthly connection sessions with transition leads and trade union representatives.

### **SPF Strategic Group update**

Sara Gorton provided an update from the strategic group meeting, following a discussion on the impact of the policy on vaccination as a condition of deployment on staff, employers, and trade unions.