

Key comms

Social Partnership Forum (SPF) Wider Group

14 September 2023

Welcome and introductions

The meeting was chaired by Will Quince, the minister of state for health, who welcomed the group and took a moment to reflect on the Countess of Chester Hospital case and sent sympathies to parents and families who are suffering as a result.

NHS Long Term Workforce Plan – Navina Evans and Barny Leavers, NHS England

Navina Evans and Barny Leavers provided an update on implementing the Long Term Workforce Plan (LTWP). Navina said that NHS England had identified the deliverables in the plan and grouped these under the three plan themes of train, retain, and reform, together with the timeframes and work required for each.

NHS England has also established its internal governance arrangements, including with regions, and its ways of working on delivery with Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) and providers. There is a current focus on retention and supporting staff in the workplace, to be followed by training expansion and reform. NHS England is keen to maintain engagement with the SPF as implementation progresses.

Will Quince mentioned that he chairs the LTWP implementation board meeting, which includes the Treasury, NHS England and Department for Education amongst others. The implementation board is discussing the details, clear deliverables, milestones and tracking progress. The SPF is vital to getting this right so the minister was pleased with the level of engagement with this group.

Trade unions highlighted the need for more focus on non-clinical staff and for there to be more educators and education capacity to enable the increase in training placements.



Winter preparedness – Dame Jenny Harries, UKHSA & Iain Pickles, NHS England

Jenny Harries provided an update on the vaccination programmes. She pointed out that the COVID-19 and seasonal flu vaccinations had been brought forward for people in higher risk groups. See NHS England's [website](#) for more information. She mentioned that 30 million people across the country will be offered the flu vaccine and 22 million offered the COVID-19 autumn booster. Jenny highlighted that there was some vaccine hesitancy in specific groups such as some ethnic minorities and religious groups. To tackle this, it is important for communications and marketing to be active on the benefits of getting vaccinated.

Iain set out the following four areas of urgent and emergency care focus for systems to prepare for winter:

1. To deliver on the urgent and emergency care recovery plan by ensuring ten high-impact interventions (same day emergency care, frailty, inpatient flow and length of stay, community bed productivity and flow, care transfer hubs, intermediate care demand and capacity, virtual wards, urgent community response, single point of access, and acute respiratory infection hubs).
2. Completing operational and surge planning to prepare for different winter scenarios.
3. ICBs should ensure effective working across all parts of the system, including acute trusts and community care, elective care, children and young people, mental health, primary, community, intermediate and social care and the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector.
4. Supporting the NHS workforce to deliver over winter.

Sara Gorton, head of health at UNISON, said trade unions are supportive of encouraging the voluntary uptake of the vaccine amongst staff and offered to help with this programme.

In response to a question from a trade union representative, Iain said NHS England is working closely with the mental health team to understand the police declaration on responding to mental health crisis patients. According to the announcement, the police will not intervene unless there is a direct threat to life. This will have implications to the ambulance, acute and mental health services.

Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) strategy – Mark Radford, NHS England

Mark provided an overview of the CNO strategy which has been under development for the last year. He said the focus of this strategy is on how to better deliver health and



care services and recognising the skills and talent that nurses, midwives and nursing associates bring to care delivery across the health and care system.

NHS England has run engagement exercises to get views from around the country. Some of the themes that have come through are EDI, collective leadership, enabling positive practice and innovation. Mark pointed out the importance of lining these themes up with existing policies. NHS England plan to launch the document at the NHS summit in November.

HPMA 2022 partnership working winner – Belfast case study – Samantha Whann and Orla Barron, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Samantha and Orla presented their partnership working case study on domestic and sexual violence and abuse. Nineteen women in Northern Ireland have been murdered since 2020, which shows danger at home is a reality. One in seven children, one in four women and one in seven men experience domestic abuse in their lifetime and one in four LGBTQ+ people experience domestic abuse.

They spoke about different methods of supporting staff, split into emotional support and practical support. The trust created a [toolkit](#) to support organisations/staff with domestic violence and abuse.

Trade union representatives were grateful for the work Samantha and Orla had done and highlighted the impact of the Belfast model. The model was covered in an [article](#) in the trade union members magazine with quotes from Samantha, Orla and other trade union colleagues.

Employer representatives also thanked Samantha and Orla for their HPMA award winning partnership initiative. Furthermore for working with the Health, Safety, Wellbeing Group of the NHS Staff Council to apply the lessons from Belfast into a [resource](#) to help trusts develop domestic violence and abuse policies.

2024/25 priorities and operational planning guidance – Iain Eaves, NHS England

Iain provided an overview of the approach to the development of the priorities for 2024/25. NHS England has begun conversations with ICBs, providers and some national partners including NHS Employers. There have been pleas for continuity and simplicity. The aim is to maintain last year's guidance and let local systems develop their own policies alongside this year's guidance.