

NHS Reform Fortnightly Update

6th May 2021

Retrospective report: 22nd April – 6th May

24th April

According to an [article](#) by *The Financial Times*, health chiefs in England are increasingly looking to the private sector to help clear the massive backlog of patients – some 4.7 million people in England - whose care has been delayed during the pandemic. The article states that the situation is creating a ‘dilemma’ for independent providers who can earn more from people who can afford to pay for their own treatment. While the original deal between the NHS and private providers struck at the start of the pandemic has expired, more than 90 providers have signed up to another four-year deal with NHS England, worth up to £10bn. This includes two of the biggest, publicly listed Spire Healthcare and privately owned Circle Healthcare. David Hare, Chief Executive of the Independent Healthcare Providers Network, called the move, “a long-term, minimum five-year, exercise to get on top of the waiting lists and improve access for NHS patients and . . . that will require a lot of capacity from the private sector.”

27th April

According to the NHS Regional Director for the North West, Bill McCarthy, NHS England will be setting a “test” for the various ways in which integrated care systems (ICS) want to organise their governance structures. All areas are currently debating the structure of their ICS for when they officially become legal entities in April 2022. *The Health Service Journal* [states](#) that one major consideration for larger ICS’ is the extent to which accountability and decision-making will be positioned as “place” level, and how to decide the shape and size of each “place” area. Speaking at an event last week, Mr McCarthy said national leaders will recognise differences between ICS areas, meaning they will be allowed to structure themselves in ways that suit their communities. Nevertheless, he suggested that NHS England will then have a role in scrutinising and making a judgement on the proposed arrangements.

29th April

On 29 April, the Chief Executive of NHS England, Sir Simon Stevens, [announced](#) that he is stepping down from the role in July after seven years in charge. Sir Simon has been widely commended for navigating the NHS through some of the service's most challenging times in history. Speaking on the resignation, Prime Minister Boris Johnson, said: “Sir Simon has led the NHS with great distinction for the past seven years. I want to thank him for his dedicated service throughout – but especially when facing the extraordinary pressures of the past year, and for his huge contribution to our vaccine rollout.” A post for his replacement will be advertised shortly. The appointment of the Board’s chosen candidate is then subject to ratification by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.

3rd May

The British Medical Association (BMA) has published the [results](#) of its latest tracker survey of 5,500 doctors. The survey found that thousands of UK doctors (21% of those surveyed) are planning to quit the NHS after the Covid pandemic because they are exhausted by their workloads and worried about their mental health. The survey also found that half of respondents are planning to work fewer hours and a quarter of respondents are more likely to take a career break. These findings underpin the BMA's calls for staff to be given more time and resources to recuperate. Dr Chaand Nagpaul, BMA council chair, said: *"It's deeply worrying that more and more doctors are considering leaving the NHS because of the pressures of the pandemic – talented, experienced professionals who the NHS needs more than ever to pull this country out of a once-in-a-generation health crisis"*.

4th May

On 4 May, the establishment of a new 'Medical Technologies' Directorate was [confirmed](#) by Steve Oldfield (Chief Commercial Officer, Department for Health and Social Care). The Directorate will sit within his Commercial and Life Sciences Group. According to Oldfield, the new Directorate will focus on the increasingly important role medical technologies are playing in the prevention of ill health and the diagnosis and treatment of disease. He says that COVID-19 in particular has shone a light on the criticality of the Med Tech sector to the effective functioning of the healthcare system, and provides an opportunity for the Department to review how it regulates, commissions and uses them on an ongoing basis. While the Directorate has been formally confirmed, its capacity and function will be built over the coming weeks, with the Department looking to hire a permanent Director of Medical Technologies.

6th May

In the [second episode](#) of NHS Providers' Digital Boards podcast series, Digital Boards: Lessons from clinical leadership, clinical leaders shared how staff experience and patient safety is at the heart of advancing digital transformation in the NHS. The podcast covered the role of a chief clinical information officer (CCIO) in driving digital development and what NHS boards can do to bring clinicians on board with the digital agenda. The speakers reflected that while the pandemic has underlined the importance of digital advancement to provide care fit for the 21st century, the NHS was already working to overcome archaic practices and to address frustrations around NHS technology. They said that the past year has accelerated this process, moving digital into a "core" part of business, rather than being viewed as an "optional extra".

Lookahead: 7th - 20th May

11th May

11:30am

The Queen's Speech will set out the Government's agenda for the next session. This will include a Health and Care Bill, which will include the plans outlined in the Government's White Paper, [Integration and Innovation: working together to improve health and social care for all](#), published in February 2021. The Bill will take forward measures that are included in the NHS Long Term Plan, and will also: Establish Integrated Care Systems as statutory bodies, formally merge NHS England and NHS Improvement, Change procurement and competition rules relating to health services. The Queen's Speech will be debated for several days.

13th May

11:00am

APPG for Health - The Health and Social Care Workforce- Challenges, Opportunities and Futureproofing.

This event will examine the state of the health and social care workforce and what is needed in the future to support staff and patients in a rapidly changing world. Speakers will discuss push and pull factors for staff recruitment and retention, challenges ahead in the Covid-19 backlog and an ageing society. The event will explore ways to improve efficiency, wellbeing, and safety now as well as in the future. Speakers include representatives from the Royal College of Nursing (RCN), Royal College of Physicians (RCP) and Allied Health Care Professionals.

Relevant Select Committee Inquiries that are currently open

- **Public Accounts Committee** - [Digital Transformation in the NHS](#)
- **Public Accounts Committee** - [NHS nursing workforce](#)
- **Public Accounts Committee** - [Adult social care markets](#)
- **Health and Social Care Committee** - [Social Care: funding and workforce](#)
- **Health and Social Care Committee** - [Workforce burnout and resilience in the NHS and social care](#)
- **Health and Social Care Committee** - [Coronavirus: lessons learnt](#)
- **Health and Social Care Committee** - [Coronavirus: recent developments](#)
- **Health and Social Care Committee** - [Department's White Paper on health and social care](#)
- **Health and Social Care Committee** - [Treatment of autistic people and individuals with learning disabilities](#)
- **Health and Social Care Committee** - [Safety of maternity services in England](#)
- **Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee** - [Long term funding of adult social care](#)
- **COVID-19 Committee** - [The long-term impact of the pandemic on parents and families](#)

Relevant Consultations that are currently open

- **Department of Health and Social Care** - [Improving Health and Wellbeing of Women in England](#)
- **Department of Health and Social Care** - [Regulating healthcare professionals, protecting the public](#)

Upcoming events

- **Monday 11th May - Westminster Health Forum:** [The future of professional healthcare regulation reform - efficiency, scope, safety, and the impact of the pandemic on the future regulatory landscape](#)
- **Monday 11th May - NHS Confederation:** [Mental health and housing: Improving services and providing integrated care](#)
- **Wednesday 13th May - NHS Confederation:** [New ways of working with physical and mental health in primary care](#)