

NHS Reform Fortnightly Update

3rd June 2021

Retrospective report: 21st May – 3rd June

21st May

In comments [made](#) to a meeting of the Conservative Policy Forum, two Conservative MPs, Maria Caulfield and Dr Ben Spencer, said that the NHS must significantly improve its training offer to staff, or risk losing many of them. Both MPs were asked how the NHS should meet the challenge of motivating and retaining staff exhausted by their efforts during the pandemic. Maria Caulfield said: “We need to focus on training because that’s how we retain staff. If a nurse wants to do a prescribing course, wants to go and do a degree or a specialist module, they do it in their own time and they often pay for it themselves. No business in the world would treat their staff like that.” Dr Spencer agreed with these remarks, adding that NHS staff have to undertake training and education “outside their working hours” if they were to have a chance of progressing in their career, whereas – in contrast – “in any other sector it would be within their package of work.” He commented that: “We have an NHS that is built on goodwill and an expectation that people will do things [because of goodwill]. That goodwill will not go on for ever. The NHS has got a lot to learn from other sectors.”

21st May

According to [the Health Service Journal \(HSJ\)](#), NHS England has asked hospitals to prepare for a potential further surge of covid cases reaching around half the level of first wave of the virus last year – and to seek to deliver 80 per cent of normal elective activity throughout it. Trusts have been asked by NHSE officials, as part of the planning process, what resources they would need to run at 80 per cent of previous volumes of elective work if this scenario occurred. They are also taking into account that it is likely to come on top of greater non-covid emergency care demand, which has been lower than normal over the past 15 months. Elective activity levels dropped substantially in each of the previous waves of the virus, as trusts were forced to redeploy staff to support covid wards and critical care units. In winter 2020-21 they dropped to around half of normal rates. The current baseline expectation is for trusts to be running elective activity at 85 per cent of pre-covid levels by July, with some trusts committing to go substantially further than this.

26th May

On 26th May, one of the largest private providers of NHS acute care, Ramsay Health Care, [announced](#) that it had reached an agreement with Spire Healthcare to buy all of its shares for almost £1bn. According to the CEO and Managing Director of Ramsay, Craig McNally, the proposed merger would “lead the way” on patient outcomes through bolstered partnerships with private health insurers, the NHS, consultant partners and associated clinical networks. Both companies are already among the larger private providers of care in the UK but if the deal goes ahead, the deal will significantly increase Ramsay’s presence in the UK independent market. The deal is subject to the approval of Spire’s shareholders and the Competition and Markets Authority, which has paid close attention to the private healthcare sector in recent years. The deal comes amid huge pressure on NHS elective waiting lists and sustained demand in the industry.

26th May

In a letter made public on 26th May, Health Secretary Matt Hancock [told](#) the Chair of the Health and Social Care Committee, Jeremy Hunt, that the core focus of the CQC's ratings of integrated care systems will be "*safety, integration and leadership*". Mr Hancock also confirmed that the Department for Health and Social Care is working with the CQC and NHS England to develop "*detailed proposals*" on how ICSs will be regulated.

The confirmation comes just days after Jeremy Hunt warned that the NHS could take a "*big step back*" if ICSs are not rated on safety and quality by the CQC. Mr Hancock noted his recommendation in the letter and said that his department will "*continue to seek to ensure that the new review mechanism and rating system adds value and improvement at each stage while avoiding introducing duplication or unnecessary regulatory burdens into the system.*"

1st June

The Royal College of GPs (RCGP) and the Doctor's Association UK (DAUK) have warned NHS Digital that plans to pool medical records on to a database and share them with third parties could erode the relationship between them and patients. The plans would put the medical histories of more than 55 million patients into a shared database available to academic and commercial third parties for research and planning purposes - a measure that has provoked concern from both privacy campaigners and association groups.

The RCGP also [said](#) that NHS Digital should better communicate with the public about its plans and their options for opting out, but that this must not become another responsibility for GPs. Professor Martin Marshall, Chair of the Royal College of GPs, said: "*The College supports the principle of improved sharing of data for important healthcare planning and research, but it is critical that this is transparent and that patients have confidence and trust in how the NHS and other bodies might use their information.*"

2nd June

The analysis of more than 350,000 responses to [the annual NHS Staff Survey](#) has shown that staff are concerned about waning collaboration and flexibility in the health service as well as a lack of personal protective equipment and wider Covid-19 dangers. The analysis found that team working / collaboration was the most common subtopic for staff when expressing areas that they felt should be learnt from and what had worked well throughout the pandemic. This area was also one of the most cited areas for improvement, with officials calling for greater collaboration to be cemented within the upcoming Health and Social Care Bill.

Lookahead: 4th June –17th June

7 June

1:00pm

House of Lords Oral Questions: Reduced funding to health partnership schemes used by UK clinicians to support doctors and nurses abroad

- Lord Crisp

8 June

11:30am

House of Commons Oral Questions to the Department of Health and Social Care

[View Questions](#)

8 June

12:00pm

House of Lords Oral Questions: Guidance to frontline staff on how to treat vulnerable disability benefit claimants

- Baroness Thomas of Winchester

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](#)
- **Health and Social Care Committee** - [Supporting those with dementia and their carers](#)
- **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](#)
- **Department of Health and Social Care** - [Standard adult ready-to-drink oral nutritional supplements: ACBS policy](#)
- **Department of Health and Social Care, Welsh Government, and Advisory Committee on Clinical Excellence Awards** - [Reforming the national Clinical Excellence Awards scheme](#)
- **Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency** - [MHRA Patient Involvement Strategy consultation](#)

Upcoming events

- **Friday 4th June - NHS Confederation** - [What about the workforce risks in managing the backlog?](#)
- **Monday 7th June - NHS Confederation** - [Innovation across NHS Wales in response to COVID19](#)
- **Tuesday 15th June - Thursday 17th June** - [NHS Confed Conference](#)