

NHS England and Improvement board meeting – 30 September 2021

Full agenda and papers can be [found here](#)

Chief executive's update:

- Summer of unprecedented pressure but also achievement
 - Launched next phase of the NHS COVID-19 vaccine programme with teams now in schools and delivering booster jabs to those eligible. The NHS COVID-19 vaccination programme has prevented more than 127,000 deaths and helped avoid more than 261,000 hospital admissions.
- Teams have made excellent progress to restore services
 - First four months of the financial year:
 - 5 million people started elective treatment achieving 90% of pre-pandemic levels
 - 7.5 million key diagnostic tests, over 95% pre-pandemic levels
 - 870,000 urgent cancer checks
 - GPs and their teams have delivered over 124 million routine appointments between April and August and delivered the majority of vaccine appointments.
- Welcome clarity for second half of financial year
 - Amanda Pritchard focused on three areas which are front of mind for patients: elective care, cancer, and primary care.
- NHS commitment to reach Net Zero by 2040
 - The NHS is on track to deliver its plan to cut emissions this financial year.

Operational performance update:

COVID-19 response:

- 5,000 COVID-19 patients currently in hospital beds and more patients requiring critical care.
- The NHS remains at an EPRR level 3 incident. NHSE/I continues to build on lessons identified from the pandemic response in anticipation of managing COVID alongside winter pressures and recovery of NHS services.

Urgent and emergency care and winter planning

- The summer months saw far greater pressures on UEC than any previous winter, along with capacity restraints on the back of COVID-19 numbers.
- NHSE/I has been working with regional teams and all key system partners to develop a comprehensive plan to ensure UEC services are prepared for the busy winter period.

Discharge and community services

- The community support services rollout of the two-hour crisis response standard for support at home is being accelerated and all parts of England will be offering this service to patients 8am-8pm, seven days a week by April 2022.

Elective care

- The elective waiting list for July 2021 stood at 5.6 million with 293,000 patients waiting 52 weeks or longer for treatment. There are 8,000 patients who have been waiting 104+ weeks for treatment.
- The 2021/22 ambition is to maximise the levels of activity; a structured elective recovery programme focussing on high impact actions to manage demand and waiting lists effectively.

Diagnostics

- In total, 1.9 million of the 15 key diagnostic tests were performed during July 2021, representing 93% of pre-pandemic activity levels.
- Additional diagnostic capacity has been created through approval of 36 “early adopter” community diagnostic hubs which will provide additional capacity for 610,000 tests in 2021/22.

Cancer

- Over 408,500 people have started treatment for cancer since March 2021, 95% of whom did so within 31 days of a decision to treat.
- Urgent cancer referrals have been at record levels since April 2021, with over 10,000 patients seen each working day.

Screening and immunisations

- The NHS breast screening programme is working to recover invitation backlogs by the end of March 2022. NHS bowel cancer screening is now at rates of over 100% of pre-COVID levels in some areas.

- Catch-up plans are in place for school aged vaccinations for the 2019/20 cohort to be vaccinated.

Primary care

- In July general practice delivered 27.9 million appointments, 8% more activity than July 2019, including 2.1 million COVID-19 vaccination appointments.
- NHSE/I have secured funding and confirmed service expectations for managing the health needs of citizens arriving in England from Afghanistan while housed in temporary bridging accommodation.

Mental health

- Improving access to psychological therapies' referral to treatment times are being met with 91.9% of people being seen within 6 weeks and 98.4% being seen within 18 weeks in May 2021, against a target of 75% and 95% respectively.
- Workforce remains the biggest risk to delivering the LTP targets and managing COVID pressures; and limits further expansion.

COVID-19 vaccination programme

- As of 26 September 2021 over 78.4 million total vaccinations in England have been administered, including over 40.9 million first doses and 37.5 million second doses.
- The universal 12-15 year-olds programme started via schools using school aged immunisation services the week commencing 20 September.

Financial update

- NHSE/I published guidance (30 September) following agreement on funding for the second half of the year.
- Organisations are broadly on plan at month four with small positive variances shown against both CCGs and providers. Additional Elective Recovery Fund (ERF) income in providers is being largely matched by additional expenditure, reflecting the successful restoration of elective activity in Q1.

Delivering a net zero NHS – one year progress

The NHS has committed to reducing its carbon footprint (emissions under the NHS's direct control) from 6.1 MtCO₂e to net zero by 2040 and by 1,189 ktCO₂e in 2021/22.

Direct NHS action:

- **Estates:** Action to improve energy efficiency and reduce energy emissions within the NHS estate is expected to deliver a 210 ktCO₂e reduction during 2021/22.
- **Travel and transport:** Reductions of 112 ktCO₂e are expected in 2021/22 as a result of rapid improvements in ultra-low emission vehicle technology and a modal shift.
- **Medicines:** Account for 25% of total NHS emissions. A reduction of 258 ktCO₂e is expected in 2021/22.

COVID-19 and climate change

- Significant reductions can be seen in travel from staff and visitors, and an increase in the uptake of virtual appointments has resulted in a 176 ktCO₂e reduction.
- Conversely, emissions have risen in a number of areas as a result of the response to COVID-19 due to expanded use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and air conditioning (HVAC) systems to protect patients and staff and the national roll-out of the NHS COVID-19 vaccination programme.

Summarising the NHS' emissions reductions

- The Greener NHS national programme received the funding and capacity required to begin implementing the net zero strategy in early 2021, targeting an in-year reduction of 526 ktCO₂e as a result of direct NHS action.
- Every trust and ICS will be expected to have a board-approved green plan (a local net zero strategy) by January and March 2022 respectively.

Tackling climate change in the NHS supply chain

- By 2045, the NHS aims to reduce the emissions of the NHS supply chain to net zero. The net zero strategy made clear that by 2030, the NHS would no longer purchase from suppliers that are not aligned with this ambition.

Preparing for climate change

- Under the adaptation reporting powers of the Climate Change Act, the Greener NHS programme has been invited by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to produce the third health and care adaptation report (HCA3) on behalf of the sector.