

Summary NHS England board meeting - 06 October 2022

Full papers [here](#).

Chief executive's update

- There are 9,500 patients in hospital with Covid-19. Five million booster doses have been administered. Work has been done to place a particular focus to reach out to underserved communities
- NHS England (NHSE) continue preparations for the winter with the predicted rise in Covid-19 and flu cases, cost of living and possible industrial action
- Primary care access remains a focus. This is displayed in the increase in community pharmacy consultations. 18,000 people were seen through this route
- The role of volunteers is vital for an improved service. Integrated care boards (ICBs) have been asked to develop volunteering structures during the next month through building on existing community connections.

Edenfield Centre - Panorama

- The chief executive expressed shock at the findings of the Panorama programme, saying that investigating further is the right thing to do as safeguarding patients is the priority
- Many staff featured in the panorama programme have been suspended with disciplinarys pending
- 'Model of Care' is to receive £2.3bn of investment to put towards community alternatives to help reduce the escalation of cases
- An increase of 20,000 staff planned, mainly in the community
- Will look at international models of care, for example Trieste in Italy
- A £36m, three-year improvement programme will be implemented to focus on quality of inpatient care
- NHSE identified more collaborative work needed with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) on inspection process.

Operational performance update

Covid-19 response

- Following a peak of just over 17,100 inpatients in early January 2022, the number of patients in hospital with Covid-19 declined to 3,800 by 1st June 2022
- There has since been an increase in recent weeks and NHSE declared we are in the fourth wave of the pandemic
- Possible driving forces include a mixture of variants spreading, a reduction in immunity amongst the population, and an increase in mutations.

Elective care

- The elective waiting list for July 2022 stood at 6.8 million. There were 377,689 patients waiting 52 weeks or over and 51,838 patients waiting 78 weeks or over for treatment. These have both shown reductions since the same time last year
- For patients waiting to start treatment at the end of July 2022, the median waiting time was 13.3 weeks
- More than 22,500 people who had been waiting two years or more at the start of the year, and a further 51,000 who would have breached two years by the end of July have now been treated.

Elective care bounce back

- Earlier in the year a programme of work, with a set of structured work streams, was mobilised to understand what may happen to demand for elective care and what level of activity might be expected to return.
- This programme is now focusing on bringing together insights to inform future understanding of elective care. At the next board meeting, NHSE will share the next steps and emerging findings.

Urgent and emergency care

- In August 2022 there were just under two million patients seen across A&E departments in England. Occupancy levels have been consistently higher than pre-pandemic levels, at around 95% for the last year
- The number of 111 calls received in August 2022 was 1,538,957, down from 1,915,777 in August 2021

- In England, for August 2022, the mean response time for Category C1, the most urgent incidents, was nine minutes eight seconds. For C2 the England mean average response time in August 2022 was 42 minutes 44 seconds, a reduction from July but still higher than the national standard
- As part of the assurance framework, the next step is to increase capacity by at least 7,000 general and acute beds through a mix of new physical beds, virtual wards and improvements elsewhere in the pathway.

Diagnostics

- In July 2022, 1.94m of the 15 key diagnostic tests were performed. Continued high volumes of pre-existing and new demand meant that 27.9% of patients waited over six weeks for a diagnostic test in July 2022.

Cancer

- Urgent suspected cancer referrals have continued at record levels (118% of pre-pandemic levels) which is the third highest level ever
- Over 1,000 lung cancers have been diagnosed through the targeted lung health checks programme, with 77% diagnosed at stage 1 or 2
- In July, results of the 2021 national cancer patient experience survey were published, with cancer patients giving the highest satisfaction rating on record for overall experience.

Primary care

- Between August 2021 and July 2022, 344.5m total appointments, including 21.6m for Covid-19 vaccinations, were delivered by general practice.
- Latest primary care workforce data show that, as of 31 July 2022, there were 35,257 full time equivalent doctors working in general practice (44,446 headcount) in England, which is an additional 731 FTE doctors in general practice compared to 31 March 2019.

Discharge

- All 42 Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) are now delivering two-hour crisis response coverage 8am-8pm, seven days a week as of 11 July 2022, meeting the new national standard as set out in the [community health service two-hour urgent community response standard guidance](#).
- Discharge delays remain a key issue and are driven by capacity challenges in adult social care. National improvement support is ongoing.

Personalisation

- The number of individuals benefitting from personalised care now stands at 3.7 million (June 2022 data). This is a marked increase against the Long Term Plan (LTP) target of 2.5 million by 2023/24.

Mental Health

- Workforce remains the biggest risk to service delivery. NHSE and Health Education England (HEE) have introduced several new roles specifically supporting earlier intervention including training of children wellbeing practitioners and educational mental health practitioners to support the mental health school teams expansion
- The urgent and emergency mental health pathway continues to be under significant pressure, experiencing high bed occupancy at 95.6% on 20 July 2022, above the safe levels of 85%
- Winter Planning has commenced with £10m of programme funding being made available to ease the seasonal pressures.

Learning disabilities and autism

- The NHS LTP commitment is that 75% of people aged 14 and over on a GP learning disability register will have an annual health check. In June 2022, 11.5% of eligible people have had an annual health check which is an increase of 7.6% compared to June 2021
- At the end of July 2022, the number of people in a mental health inpatient setting was 1,990 (1,790 adults and 205 under 18s).

Screening and immunisations

- The NHS bowel cancer screening programme continues to exceed the 65% uptake target with extension to 58-year-olds having started in April 2022
- Following the detection of polio virus in sewage samples in some London boroughs, NHS London has responded by delivering an immunisation catch up for the under-fives and a booster campaign for one to nine-year-olds who are not fully vaccinated
- The NHS continues to deliver an outbreak immunisation service to those at high risk of contracting monkeypox, offering targeted and opportunistic appointments across the country.

Covid-19 vaccination programme

- As of 16 September 2022, over 127.6m Covid-19 vaccinations (over 45.2m first doses, 42.6m second doses, over 33.5m booster/third doses and over 5.4m fourth spring booster doses) have been recorded in England
- 5m booster doses across 3,000 sites in England have already been given as part of the autumn booster campaign
- In the week beginning 26 September, there were 22,000 volunteer hours delivered in the vaccination programme.

Covid-19 testing

- Over 51.4m PCR tests have been reported by NHS and PHE pillar 1 laboratories, of which, 4.6m are staff (including index cases) PCR tests
- The NHS remain at a steady state in the provision of PCR testing as commissioned by the UKHSA.

Long Covid

- During June and July 2022 around 1,248 people were being referred to long-covid services each week, a slight decrease from May 2022
- 90 specialist long-covid services are now in operation around England, which focus on assessment, diagnosis and treatment or rehabilitation. In addition, there are 14 paediatric hubs providing specialist advice to local services treating children and young people with long-covid.

Update on 2022/23 operational planning for Covid-19

- To date, in England: Over 104,000 Covid-19 treatments have been provided for hospitalised patients and over 69,000 treatments provided for non-hospitalised patients through the Covid-19 Medicine Delivery Units (CMDUs) since December 2021
- The national institute for health and care excellence (NICE) technology appraisal guidance on future access to Covid-19 therapeutics is in development and due to be published in early 2023.

Children and young people (CYP)

- Each region has now appointed a clinical lead for both diabetes and epilepsy, and governance is in place to drive forward the development and implementation of delivery plans through regions and systems.
- 14 pilot sites have been appointed to test and develop new ways of working to integrate care across systems and across health, children's social care and education, with an aim to provide learning for ICBs and Integrated Care Partnerships (ICPs).

Financial performance update

- NHSE is in aggregate £200m off their budget plan and that is largely because of some deterioration in the provider position
- Providers are continuing to be under enormous pressure in part due to the continuing effects of Covid-19 which are driving much higher temporary staffing costs
- Still forecasting to come in on budget but identified that there is obvious risk present
- Noted the health and care service entered the pandemic with little or no resilience due to ten years of underfunding
- This year total funding for the NHS was planned to be reduced in real terms by 1.4%.
- In total the efficiency ask of systems this year was £5.6bn in cash terms. The real terms effect is more significant due to higher inflation costs
- NHSE last year committed to around £12bn in efficiency savings, however this was based on the assumption that the pressures of Covid-19 would have eased off by this point and that is no longer seen as feasible
- Total cost pressures are estimated to be around £14bn by 24/25
- The confounding factor currently is the ongoing inflation pressure. This could see further cost pressures of £6-7bn in addition to the £14bn by 24/25.

Maternity and neonatal services update

- Donna Ockenden has been appointed chair of the independent review into maternity and neonatal services at Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust. The review will consider cases from April 2012 up until three months before the publication of the final report
- The number of midwives substantively has decreased nationally with 693 FTE less than the same period last year
- The number of support workers in post within maternity services has increased by 2% to 6,454 FTE in July 2022 compared to July 2021, and the number of obstetrician consultants in post increased by 216 FTE to 1,487 FTE as at July 2022

- Maternal medicine networks are now commissioned, and all are expected to be operational by the end of 2022. They will provide timely access to specialist care for all women with pre-existing medical conditions and complications that arise during pregnancy. Obstetrics physicians are currently undergoing training to be leaders of these networks
- Recently published Office of National Statistics data indicates an increase in the stillbirth rate. While research indicates that outcomes are good for most babies born to women with a Covid-19 infection, higher Covid-19 infection rates and higher mortality rates in pregnant women with Covid-19 have contributed to the increase in stillbirth rate in 2021.

Access to primary care

- There was a decline in public satisfaction in the [GP Patient Survey](#), which was published in July 2022. However, GP appointments continue to rise and at July 2022 showed 345 million appointments over the last 12 months, compared to 309 million in the 12 months up to July 2019
- From October 2022, networks will be able to recruit to two new roles, including GP assistants and digital and transformation leads
- In June 2022, 96,700 community pharmacist consultation service consultations were completed, all of which prior to 2019 would have been handled by a GP.

New hospitals programme

- The [programme](#) has not, to date, had a budget for the full programme agreed by the government, a programme scope or timeline. It is also currently a Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) programme, although it is supported by NHSE staff
- The first hospital- the Northern Centre for Cancer Care - has been completed and is open, and six further hospitals are under construction
- The funding currently covers the completion of around 18 hospitals. Decisions are under review with His Majesty's Treasury and No.10 to take forward the inclusion of the next eight schemes in the programme.

Healthcare inequalities annual report

- NHSE have worked to ensure there is focus on tackling health inequalities across a range of national reports and guidance. This includes:
 - reviewing guidance and policies produced across NHSE to ensure they take adequate account of known health inequalities
 - inputting into various cross-government programmes of work

- supporting NHSE's developing approach to digital inclusion following the [Laura Wade-Gery Review](#), which highlighted the need to bring together consideration of digital inclusion and health inequalities
- The national healthcare inequalities improvement programme has worked with NHS Digital to support the delivery of the digital inclusion health inequalities pioneers programme in ten ICSs
- NHS England is working to finalise a Core20PLUS5 approach for Children and Young People, due to be published before the end of 2022
- Working with local community and faith leaders, and other partners, NHSE have supported increased Covid-19 vaccination uptake among more hesitant groups. Since July 2021, when all adults had received an offer of a first dose, the gap in uptake between white British and ethnic minority groups has reduced by five percentage points
- The innovation for healthcare inequalities programme is investing £4.2m distributed across all 42 ICSs to drive action on Core20PLUS5.