

Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP)

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2023 via Microsoft Teams

Members present:

Sir Norman Williams, Chair
Simon Brake
Irfan Chaudry
Tansi Harper
Graham Jagger
Rajesh Khanna
Luke March
Nick Relph
Tony Schapira
Michael Scott
Rohan Sivanandan
Elaine Strachan-Hall
Suzy Walton

In attendance:

Richard Jeavons, IRP Chief Executive
IRP secretariat
Grayling Communications representative

Apologies:

Miles Wagstaff

1. Welcome, declarations of interest and minutes of the previous meeting

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed members and opened the meeting. Member Simon Brake declared a new interest as a recently appointed member of the Maternity and Neonatal Action Forum for the Department of Health and Social Care which has been added to the register of interests.
- 1.2 The minutes from the IRP meeting held on 11 July 2023 were formally approved.

2. NHS Long Term Workforce Plan

- 2.1 Members received a presentation from Barny Leavers, the director of the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan for NHS England.
- 2.2 Key points and themes included:
 - The plan looks at workforce supply and demand over the next 15 years, is backed by government funding, and links to the government's mandate for NHS England, the NHS Constitution, the NHS Long Term Plan, and the national recovery plans for elective care, urgent and emergency care and primary care.
 - The plan sets out new ways of working and training, including expanding community, primary care and mental health services to treat more people closer to home and outside of a hospital setting.
 - There is an emphasis on more generalist skills and training for clinicians to support the ageing population and people with co-morbidities across a larger geography. The aim is to update the plan at least every two years as new technologies and models of care emerge.

- There are opportunities to better align university training places and apprenticeships to areas which have a workforce shortfall. Improving retention is a key ambition.

2.3 Key points that arose from the panel's discussion included:

- The support needed for integrated care systems to implement the plan locally, give feedback to the national leads and bring workforce planning together with service and financial planning.
- The training implications for universities and hospitals on top of already high clinical demand and the capital infrastructure needed.
- The expansion of new clinical roles such as physician associates and advanced clinical practitioners.
- The evidence to support the retention and productivity modelling and links with the independent sector.
- The relationship between workforce planning and patient safety.

2.4 The Chair thanked Mr Leavers for an interesting and engaging discussion.

3. Chair's update

3.1 The Chair updated members on progress with public appointments. Six roles for new panel members were recently advertised and a shortlisting meeting led by Department of Health and Social Care officials was held in August with interviews planned for October.

3.2 Members received and noted the panel's business meeting schedule for 2024.

4. Health and Care Act 2022: update on the commencement of the new reconfiguration intervention powers for ministers

4.1 Members received a verbal update from the IRP secretariat on the Department of Health and Social Care's (DHSC) work to implement the reconfiguration powers for ministers in Schedule 6 of the Health and Care Act 2022.

4.2 Secondary legislation to commence the powers is expected to be laid before Parliament in the coming months with statutory guidance accompanied by additional policy guidance from the department for local authorities and NHS bodies.

4.3 Policy officials in DHSC are continuing with a period of national and local stakeholder engagement to give advance notice of the proposed policy changes to those who will be impacted.

5. NHS reconfigurations

- 5.1 Members received a report summarising current NHS reconfiguration proposals across England, including major acute service changes and those involving primary and community care.
- 5.2 Member Simon Brake declared an interest having previously worked as the independent chair of the NHS Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin 'Future Fit' Joint Committee and therefore recused himself from the discussion for this item.
- 5.3 It was noted that Telford and Wrekin Council's referral to the Secretary of State was under consideration by the Department of Health and Social Care. The referral asks the Secretary of State to review the decisions made about the accident and emergency department and consultant-led women's and children's services at the Princess Royal Hospital in Telford. The panel had previously provided advice to ministers about the proposal in 2019.
- 5.4 The panel also noted that Devon County Council's health scrutiny committee has convened a task group to gather evidence to possibly submit a new referral to the Secretary of State to object to the closure of Teignmouth Community Hospital. The panel had previously provided advice to ministers about the proposal in 2021.

6. Any other business

- 6.1 The Chair gave his thanks to members Irfan Chaudry and Nick Relph, whose appointments will both end on 30 September 2023 after three years of service. The panel wished them both well for the future.
- 6.2 The Chair thanked all those present and closed the meeting.