



Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP)

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2024 online

Members present:

Sir Norman Williams, Chair
Simon Brake
Tansi Harper
Graham Jagger
Rajesh Khanna
Luke March
Tony Schapira
Rohan Sivanandan
Elaine Strachan-Hall
Miles Wagstaff
Suzy Walton

In attendance:

Richard Jeavons, IRP Chief Executive
IRP Secretariat
Grayling Communications representative

Apologies:

None

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

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed members and opened the meeting.
- 1.2 No new interests were declared and the minutes from the meeting held on 30 January 2024 were formally approved.

2. Chair's update

- 2.1 The Chair updated members on progress with public appointments and congratulated Elaine Strachan-Hall, Simon Brake, Raj Khanna, Suzy Walton, Luke March and Rohan Sivanandan who had all been re-appointed by ministers to serve second terms with the IRP.
- 2.2 The appointments of five new members had also been approved by ministers and it was expected that the new members would start in the coming weeks once their security checks had been completed by the Department of Health and Social Care.
- 2.3 The Chair reminded members of the process for the 2023/24 end of year appraisals and members received and noted the latest version of the IRP's code of practice. This had been updated by the Secretariat to align with the latest guidance on corporate governance from HM Treasury and the Cabinet Office.

3. Implementation of intervention powers over the reconfiguration of NHS services introduced on 31 January 2024 via the Health and Care Act 2022

- 3.1 Members received and noted an updated terms of reference for the IRP that had been approved by the Minister of State for Health, The Rt Hon Andrew Stephenson MP, to reflect the new legislation on NHS reconfigurations which came into force on 31 January 2024.
- 3.2 The power for local authorities to refer proposals to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care under the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing

Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 had been removed from 31 January 2024 and there were no outstanding referrals made under this previous legislation with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC).

- 3.3 A written briefing prepared by the Secretariat on NHS reconfigurations in the pipeline was discussed. It was noted that DHSC had received several requests for the Secretary of State to use the new call in power in schedule 10a of the National Health Service Act 2006 (introduced via the Health and Care Act 2022) for two NHS reconfiguration proposals so far.
- 3.4 The call in requests made related to changes to the paediatrics service at Eastbourne District General Hospital in East Sussex and the closure of the hyper-acute stroke unit at Yeovil District Hospital in Somerset.
- 3.5 It was noted that Teignbridge District Council had also recently voted to ask the Secretary of State to examine the case for the retention of Teignmouth Hospital in Devon. The Panel had previously provided advice on the NHS reconfiguration proposal in 2021 to the then Secretary of State, The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP.
- 3.6 Members received and noted guidance on the pre-election period of sensitivity before local elections to take place in England on 2 May 2024.

4. Arrangements for next IRP meeting – 14 May 2024

- 4.1 Members discussed topics to cover at the next meeting to strengthen their understanding of issues related to NHS reconfigurations. Suggestions included urgent and emergency care transformation, workforce shortages, maternity and neonatal services, mental health services and virtual wards.
- 4.2 The Chair thanked all those present and closed the meeting.