



## **Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP)**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2025 online**

#### **Members present:**

Sir Norman Williams, Chair  
Simon Brake  
Mark Cheetham  
Tansi Harper  
Graham Jagger  
Rajesh Khanna  
Ann Lloyd  
Angela McNab  
Luke March  
Rohan Sivanandan  
David Stout  
Elaine Strachan-Hall  
Miles Wagstaff  
Suzy Walton  
Andrea Young

#### **In attendance:**

Richard Jeavons, IRP Chief Executive  
IRP Secretariat

#### **Apologies received:**

Tony Schapira

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

- 1.1 The Chair opened the meeting and member Elaine Strachan-Hall declared a new interest as the interim director of quality for North West Ambulance Service NHS Trust from 17 March 2025. The IRP's register of interests was updated.
- 1.2 The minutes from the IRP meeting held on 14 January 2025 were formally approved.

### **2. Chair's update**

- 2.1 The Chair updated members on the ongoing public appointments campaign for two clinical members and two lay members to replace those IRP members whose terms are due to end in September. The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) had received over 70 applications and shortlisting had been completed with the IRP Chair in February with interviews expected in April to be followed by a decision by the Secretary of State.
- 2.2 A meeting was held between the IRP Chair and DHSC officials on 24 February to discuss committee business and the call in requests that had been received by ministers.
- 2.3 The Secretary of State had decided in February not to call in NHS England's proposal to relocate the principal treatment centre for children's cancer services in south London. The decision had been made without the IRP's involvement.
- 2.4 Two call in requests that had been received by the Secretary of State from local authorities regarding the Humber acute services reconfiguration had remained

outstanding for decision for several months. The IRP had not been commissioned for advice, although this remained an option open to ministers.

- 2.5 The Chair had raised again with DHSC his disappointment that his request for an introductory meeting with the Minister of State for Health, as the responsible minister for the IRP and NHS reconfiguration policy, had not yet been organised. The Chair had also not received a response to his welcome letter to the Secretary of State issued in October 2024. It was understood that DHSC officials would liaise with the ministerial private offices on the matter.
- 2.6 Members noted that the IRP's annual business review for 2024-25 will be published in April and circulated to members beforehand. End of year performance reviews of the members will also be completed by Chair and shared with DHSC as is a requirement for public office holders. The Chair thanked all members for their advice and support over the past year and confirmed he was available to discuss any appraisal matters with individual members if they wished.
- 3. IRP process for giving preliminary advice to the Secretary of State on use of the call in power for NHS reconfiguration proposals**
  - 3.1 Members discussed a briefing on the relevant factors for the Secretary of State to consider when determining whether to use the call in power for any contested NHS reconfiguration proposals as set out in DHSC's statutory guidance. The IRP Chair had agreed with DHSC a 20 working day timescale for the IRP to provide the Secretary of State with independent preliminary advice to help them to determine whether to use the call in power.
  - 3.2 Members raised that there could be more done to review lessons learned from previous NHS reconfiguration cases to develop a learning culture with DHSC and local NHS integrated care boards on the issues raised. The IRP Chair and Chief Executive supported the idea and suggested that the IRP's role would be to encourage the bodies concerned to conduct evaluation as part of good governance.
- 4. Any other business**
  - 4.1 The Chair informed members that he had written to Sir Jim Mackey to welcome him to his new role as Transition CEO of NHS England from the first of April and to confirm the IRP's commitment to maintain an excellent working relationship with NHS England officials. Sir Jim had replied with his thanks.
  - 4.2 The IRP's next business meeting was due to be held on 15 May in London. The Chair invited members to propose suggestions for guest speakers on the topic of the future of integrated care systems, including local government devolution, health scrutiny and the role of integrated care boards in commissioning.
  - 4.3 The Chair thanked members and closed the meeting.