

Key Communications

Meeting Date: 6 December 2016

Sir Andrew Cash, Chief Executive, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals, chaired the December Policy Board meeting. The Policy Board increased its membership, recruiting a number of Chief Executive Officers (CEO) in September. This has raised the profile of the Policy Board, helping to increase its influence and improve NHS Employers ability to ensure that the voice of employers is heard at a national level. Each CEO member is 'sponsoring' a specific work area of NHS Employers, to act as a reference point.

CHIEF EXECUTIVES REPORT

Danny Mortimer, Chief Executive of NHS Employers, informed the Policy Board that the General Medical Council had carried out research that identified some junior doctors were missing educational opportunities and also consultants had less time to commit to training. Research from the Royal College of Physicians had found junior doctors reporting they were working rotas with gaps and this was putting pressure on service delivery and limiting educational opportunities. There were also some positive messages around junior doctors reporting their training experience was good. The new junior doctors' contract provides a formal mechanism to flag up concerns related to service pressures and training opportunities, and it should be possible to see how these mechanisms are being deployed in the coming months. Policy Board highlighted the importance of junior doctors not feeling detached from the organisations they work for. To prevent this detachment, NHS Employers will look to identify and promote practical examples of supporting junior doctors to feel part of an organisation and team.

Danny said he was pleased to announce that confirmation had been received from the Department of Health (DH) and Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs) on the financial support for the deal agreed on paramedics pay grading. The new deal will see paramedics in England move up from band 5 to band 6. The move reflects the additional clinical responsibilities carried out by paramedics and their role in patient care.

Policy Board asked how NHS Employers could support NHS organisations reduce their agency spend. Sue Covill, Director of Development and Employment said NHS Employers has been commissioned by DH to look into promoting effective rostering and supporting flexible working. NHS Employers is also working with a hundred trusts to identify proven ways to improve staff retention and will share learning with the service.

REGULATORY STRATEGY

Harry Cayton, Chief Executive of the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) informed Policy Board that the Government was expected to launch a consultation on regulatory reform in the New Year.

The consultation was based on a paper PSA wrote last year 'Rethinking regulation'. PSA believe there is over regulation of health and care and it is not sufficiently targeted or cost effective. Harry said regulators need to adopt a 'right touch' approach and recognise that it is better for organisations to focus on quality themselves rather than rely on external assurance. Harry also said that the PSA is keen for regulators to work with employers to resolve fitness to practice cases at an early stage – avoiding the need for lengthy and costly legal action. NHS Employers will respond to the Government consultation on regulation reform and support Policy Board members to do likewise, so the Government receives a comprehensive view from employers.

NATIONAL WORKFORCE STRATEGY

Gavin Larner, Director of Workforce, DH was due to attend the meeting but had been called to meet with Secretary of State so Danny Mortimer led this agenda item on Gavin's behalf. Danny told the Policy Board the DH recognised more work is needed on the workforce challenge but a lengthy one-off workforce strategy document will have limited value. DH is therefore going to establish a national board, chaired by Minister, looking at workforce issues. This will support alignment between DH and the ALBs.

SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSFORMATION PLANS (STPS): WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

NHS Employers had reviewed a number of the plans and identified the following workforce themes arising from the STPs:

- Leadership challenge – use of distributed leadership, where responsibility is shared
- Roles – to be redesigned or new roles created
- New teams – developing new teams and organisational forms
- Engagement – the need for wider involvement in the STPs
- National/local – to ensure STPs and national workforce strategies align.

NHS Employers has commissioned work to be undertaken by the University of Bath on building trust in system working; is supporting work on new roles; linking with the Carter Team on identifying good practice to improve productivity and through the national Social Partnership Forum helping encourage appropriate trade union engagement in the STPs.

Policy Board asked NHS Employers to look into how it can help effective integration of primary care; identify and promote good practice arising from the STPs and encourage collaboration and co-operation in place based care.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 23 February 2017, 11-2pm, Horizon, Leeds, 2 Brewery Wharf, Kendell Street, Leeds LS10 1JR