

# Key communications

Meeting Date: 23 February 2017

Debbie Herring, director of strategic development and clinical services partnerships at Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust, chaired the February policy board meeting on behalf of Sir Andrew Cash. The meeting covered an update from Danny Mortimer, chief executive of NHS Employers, on key pieces of work and topics: consultant contract reform, the workforce implications of Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs), working with the armed forces – step into health, staff retention and workforce productivity. This information is set out in the chief executive's report.

## CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

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Danny Mortimer spoke about the NHS workforce strategy, which is now being taken forward by a group chaired by health minister, Philip Dunne. NHS Employers has a seat on this group, along with the Department of Health and arm's length bodies, and will liaise with employers, the Association of UK University Hospitals (AUKUH) and NHS Providers through the policy board and HR director networks, to ensure a comprehensive employer voice is fed into discussions on national workforce priorities.

## CONSULTANT CONTRACT REFORM

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Paul Wallace, director of employment relations and reward at NHS Employers, thanked Ros Tolcher, chief executive at Harrogate and District, and Nick Hulme, chief executive at the Ipswich Hospital NHS Trust, for supporting NHS Employers' work in this area. There followed a wide ranging discussion on employer priorities for consultant contract reform, including the mechanisms for implementing change. Policy board members provided a steer to NHS Employers on employer priorities and re-iterated the importance of any contract reforms being delivered in a cost neutral financial envelope. The role of the Hospital Consultants and Specialist Association (HCSA) and how they will now be involved in the negotiations process for reform of the consultant contract was also discussed, following NHS Employers recent announcement of national recognition of the HCSA.

## STPS: WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

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Rebecca Smith, director of engagement at NHS Employers, said there had been a Social Partnership Forum (SPF) workshop to explore a potential staff security package/employment offer to support and help retain staff through system change. Facilitating better trade union engagement in the STPs and how the national SPF could further support the STPs was also discussed. Matthew Winn, CE, Cambridgeshire Community Services and policy board SPF lead, said that it is positive that NHS England is engaging with trade unions - giving them a more informed view on STPs. Danny said that trade unions need to be engaged in the STPs and through the SPF, employers and trade unions could look at areas where they are managing change well, learn from

them and produce some principles to support others. Chair advised that it is important that any product developed nationally does not impede development locally.

### WORKING WITH THE ARMED FORCES – STEP INTO HEALTH

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The step into health initiative aims to support former members of the armed forces and their family members to consider a career in the NHS. There have been five pilot sites which have worked with a full time co-ordinator to support the initiative. NHS Employers has been working with the pilot sites and partner organisations to gain a commitment from NHS organisations to help move from pilots to a sustainable model for the future. NHS Employers will support NHS organisations by developing resources such as a pledge pack and how to guide. The proposed launch date is September 2017, where NHS Employers would like a number of organisations to share their pledge. Sue advised that step into health sits hand in hand with the covenant but the latter is reservist specific. She said that as part of the NHS Employers' programme on reservists, there is some mapping of qualifications between the military and the NHS and a similar approach to map roles. Sue said that HEE is planning to provide resource for step into health and LWABs could help with local co-ordination.

### STAFF RETENTION

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Sue Covill said NHS Employers had shared a briefing with the DH on staff retention. Suggestions for further focus include looking at the data on retention; generational differences and the need to tailor the offer to staff accordingly and the impact of affordable housing for NHS staff in certain parts of the country. Policy board members advised that retention should sit alongside productivity and that when looking at organisational cultures it is important to understand that staff often leave teams, not organisations. Policy board added local leadership on culture, staff engagement and support for tackling violence from members of the public were all important. Sue confirmed that it was in the first twelve months of their career that staff are most likely to leave. Chair said that it is important to communicate a positive image of the NHS as a place to work, to counter the negative media coverage, and encourage more people to consider a career in the NHS.

### WORKFORCE PRODUCTIVITY – HEALTH FOUNDATION

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Anita Charlesworth, Health Foundation spoke about the early findings from the workforce productivity research. The analysis shows that between March 2010 and March 2016, there had been a 20 per cent increase in the consultant workforce. Anita ran through factors associated with consultant productivity which included organisations having a higher proportion of nurses and clinical support staff. Anita said the aim of her analysis is to stimulate a discussion on improving consultant productivity. Anita will speak more about her analysis and findings on workforce productivity at [NHS Employers workforce Summit](#) on 13 June.

### DATE OF NEXT MEETING

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Tuesday 25 April, 11-2pm, Broadway, Floor 4, 50 Broadway, London