

NHS Interim People Plan

Briefing for board members

The [Interim People Plan for the NHS](#) has been developed over the last few months and sets an agenda to tackle the range of workforce challenges in the NHS with a particular focus on the actions for this year.

Baroness Harding has described the interim plan as follows:

“This interim People Plan doesn’t answer all the questions we know need answering, nor does it set out a detailed 5 -10 year roadmap.

“It does, however, set out our vision for our people and the urgent actions we all need to take this year, both to make immediate improvements but also to build a plan for our people that is fully integrated with those for financial and operational delivery.”

- Workforce supply is acknowledged as the biggest challenge facing the NHS but the plan is clear that the quality of staff experience must be improved or those extra people will not stay, or come at all.
- The NHS Interim People Plan has been developed with involvement from NHS Employers and a wide range of other stakeholders to set out an initial approach to tackling the range of workforce challenges.
- The substantive People Plan will be published following the Spending Review. Key financial commitments will be decided as part of the Spending Review.
- NHS organisations will be expected to undertake initial actions and further action following the publication of the final People Plan.

Key themes

- Making the NHS the best place to work
- Improving NHS leadership culture
- Addressing workforce shortages
- Delivering 21st century care
- Developing a new operating model for workforce.

Making the NHS the best place to work

- The plan acknowledges that people working in the NHS report 'growing pressure, frustration..., and rising levels of bullying and harassment'.
- BME staff report the poorest workplace experiences.
- Sickness absence runs 2 percentage points higher than the rest of the economy.
- 1 in 11 staff leave the NHS permanently each year.

Making the NHS the best place to work

- NHS organisations will be asked to develop their approach to making their organisation the best place to work.
- They will also be asked to contribute ideas to the development of a new offer for staff setting out the support they can expect from the NHS as a modern employer.
- There will be a summer of conversation led by the new chief people officer to develop this offer to staff.

Making the NHS the best place to work

This offer would cover:

- creating a healthy inclusive and compassionate culture (including ensuring equality and diversity, tackling bullying and reducing violence)
- enabling great development and fulfilling careers (including CPD and ensuring recognition of qualifications between employers)
- ensuring everyone feels they have a voice, control and influence (including freedom to speak up, health and wellbeing and flexible working).

A balanced scorecard will be developed to assess organisations in these areas via the NHS Oversight Framework and the CQC Inspection Framework (Well Led Assessment).

Pensions

- As part of the theme of making NHS the best place to work, there is an acknowledgement of the impact of the current pension taxation policy on staff retention, particularly in relation to senior clinicians.
- Accordingly, the government is bringing forward a consultation on a proposal for new pension flexibility for senior clinicians.
- The proposal would give senior clinicians the option to halve the rate at which their NHS pension grows, in exchange for halving their contributions to the scheme.
- This consultation is expected to take place over the summer, and it may lead to changes from April 2020.

Improving leadership and culture

The plan says NHS leaders should have:

- 'a compassionate inclusive culture' including senior leaders, clinical and non-clinical roles and the 'vital middle manager layer.'
- It should have a greater focus on collaborative talent management and a range of measures for greater board assurance.

NHS England/Improvement will work to develop an agreed set of competencies for senior leadership roles and will engage widely on options for assuring leadership (which will enable a response to the Kerr and Kark reviews).

They will agree a new compact setting out the 'gives and gets' to shape the development of senior leaders.

Leadership priority areas

- System leadership
- Quality improvement
- Talent management
- Inclusion and diversity.

These leadership challenges apply just as much to the national NHS arms-length bodies, which have an equally important role to play in fostering a new leadership culture.

Addressing workforce shortages

The plan includes measures to improve workforce supply and retention across the NHS clinical workforce. There will be a focus on nursing in terms of immediate actions which include:

- NHS England/Improvement expanding its retention support programme with a focus on the most challenged areas
- increasing clinical placements by 25% to 5,000 by September 2019
- developing a new return to practice scheme in conjunction with Mumsnet
- better coordination of international recruitment with a national procurement framework for lead agencies.

Addressing workforce shortages

The final People Plan, which is scheduled for release later this year, will cover:

- entry routes into the profession building on the nurse apprenticeship and nurse associate routes
- the development of a 'blended learning nursing degree' programme working with higher education providers
- greater focus on primary and community nursing.

Subject to resources being allocated within the spending review, the aim would be to achieve a phased restoration of previous CPD funding levels over five years.

Delivering 21st century care

In order to deliver the vision of care set out in the NHS Long Term Plan, the report calls for a reshaping of the NHS workforce. It specifically calls for:

- a transformed workforce with a more varied and richer skill mix, new types of roles and different ways of working
- the scaling up of new roles via multi-professional credentialing and more effective use of the apprenticeship levy.

There will be further detailed planning work across all major NHS workforce care groups and discussion with the service over future needs before the final plan.

Delivering 21st century care



On nursing, the plan calls for further expansion of the nursing associate role to reach 7,500 nursing associates by the end of 2019.

On medical workforce, it pledges an expansion of doctors in primary care by 5,000, further roll out of medical credentialing and support for shortage areas and for the development of more generalist roles.

There will also be action to expand AHP, scientific and other roles as well further develop multi-professional team working starting in primary care networks.

A new programme entitled *Releasing Time to Care*, which has a focus on using technology to support better deployment of staff time and increase productivity, will be launched.

A new operating model for workforce

The interim plan accepts that the workforce planning model in the NHS needs to change.

It argues that functions should be undertaken at the best level to meet the needs of the services. It commits to devolution of responsibility to the Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) as over time they will 'take on greater responsibility for people planning and transformation activities, in line with their developing maturity.'

A newly developed ICS workforce 'maturity framework' will be used to assess the readiness of ICS to take on responsibilities including workforce planning.

Developing the final People Plan

This interim plan will be followed by work over the summer with a range of stakeholders to help develop a fully-costed final plan.

The aim is to publish a full, five-year plan later this year, following the Spending Review and the development of five-year STP/ICS plans.

The final plan will include:

- measures to embed culture change and develop leadership capability
- more detail on changes to professional education and on investment in CPD
- more detail on additional staff needed.

Developing the final People Plan

- The final plan will be developed via National People Board (to be chaired by the CPO, Prerana Issar) and an advisory board (to be chaired by Baroness Harding).
- The way of working will reflect that established in the last phase with working groups chaired by senior leaders including chief executives drawn from the service (Navina Evans, Rob Webster, Julian Hartley).
- The plan will seek investment from the CSR, but is clear that there must be a focus on the things that are in the control of the NHS.