

Background briefing paper for Southwark Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission's review of the Health and Social Care Workforce

1. Introduction

This briefing sets out key information about the Guy's and St Thomas's (GSTT) workforce, with specific detail on the impact of the pandemic and Brexit, as well as an overview of recruitment and retention efforts. GSTT is the largest NHS Trust in South East London and the Trust's Chief People Officer is Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for Workforce across the Integrated Care System (ICS).

GSTT has led the development and delivery of the vaccination programme in SEL and continues to work in collaboration with partners across the ICS.

Specific questions around both GSTT's and the ICS' workforce priorities have been addressed, which seek to improve our position as anchor employers, working more closely with local communities to improve employment opportunities.

The most significant issue that both the Trust and the sector have had to manage is the impact of the pandemic which continues to affect the volumes of activity with elective recovery and the impact of winter. During 2020, we saw a significant reduction in vacancies and turnover but as the economy has opened up, these have returned to almost pre pandemic levels last seen in 2019.

The paper presents workforce detail for GSTT and also a view of the wider context and sector wide priorities.

2. Guy's and St. Thomas's

a. The impact of work on the well-being, mental health, morale and physical burnout of the health and social care workforce

The full long term effects of the pandemic on the NHS workforce are yet to be fully understood. Levels of non-Covid related sickness remained relatively stable through each wave with spikes in Covid related absence at the peak.

From the annual 2020 NHS staff survey, GSTT's results were as follows:

- The Trust achieved 6.2 on the Health & Wellbeing theme in 2020 above the national average which was at 6.1. This is an improvement on our score of 6.0 in 2019.
- Staff working on Covid wards/areas reported a score of 5.9 on health and wellbeing and this is above the national average which was at 5.7.

- Staff who were redeployed reported a score of 5.9 on health and wellbeing, above the national average which was at 5.6.
- 46% of respondents have reported that they have felt unwell as a result of work related stress as compared to 41% in 2019. This is slightly higher than the national average.
- 45% of the respondents have indicated that they came into work despite not feeling well enough to perform their duties as compared to the national average of 47%. The Trust has improved on this score by 11% since 2019 and this also aligned to the national average which has improved significantly.

The staff health and wellbeing programme was recently assessed as part of the Mayor of London's Healthy Workplace Award receiving the Excellence level of accreditation. It provides a comprehensive and varied package of support and benefits open to all employees regardless of role to support their professional, personal and family lives.

b. Actions to encourage retention of the existing workforce

Supporting the health and wellbeing of our staff has always been a priority for the Trust and is a key aid to improve retention. In addition, flexible and remote working for many staff was the norm during the pandemic and supports staff to have more or different sorts of flexibility in their working lives.

A renewed focus on personal and professional development and attending to the 'hygiene' factors at work will be the emphasis of our retention effort and we enjoy the continued support of our charity for an extensive series of benefits.

c. Actions to recruit to vacancies

Recruitment activity is high across all areas reflecting heightened activity within the Trust. The number of new starters (excluding doctors and temporary staff) between August and October 2021 was 1,544, an increase of 29% compared to the previous 3 months.

Recruitment of experienced specialist nurses continues to be challenging and we have engaged a number of international recruitment agencies to source candidates from overseas.

d. Actions to train the local workforce

As an anchor organisation, we aim to grow our workforce from within our local communities.

The GSTT Widening Participation Team have led on bringing together a South East London ICS wide network, which has worked together to submit a bid for the Mayor's Academy Funding (£250k).

Examples of progress are:

- Kickstart: an initial 10 posts approved by Lambeth Council and a further 7 offers were made at a Southwark Youth Hub event in late October. We will attend further recruitment events at the Southwark Youth Hub to recruit additional candidates. Posts are for 6 months and we will create a wraparound support package to enable candidates to successfully move into permanent employment at the end.
- Our partnership with Southwark College includes the provision of in person access to experts from the Trust, providing information on careers and apprenticeships whilst showcasing variety of roles within healthcare and access to health and finance information.
- Our 6th Bespoke Health Sector Based Work Academy Work Experience and Internships is due to start shortly. In June 2021, we relaunched our work experience placements. To date we have had 83 Work Experience Placements and 7 Neurodiversity Internships have been arranged despite Covid restrictions being in place.
- Our Virtual Work Experience Package will offer Nursing/Midwifery, Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) and Admin and Clerical roles
- Project Choice specialise in supported work experience and internships covering all Special Educational Needs and Learning Disabilities (SEND). We will initially focus on Work Experience placements from February 2022 for a single SEND school in Lambeth. This builds on the 10 years of work with The Autism Project/ Care Trade in providing placements and employment to young people with Autism.
- Supporting an NHS Cadets Unit based at Southbank UTC, due to start in early 2022. Additionally we have a Year 13/Bank Readiness project – Starting in January. Evelina London will take 13 Southbank UTC Year 13s for their 100 hours work experience. We have agreed on a programme that includes work based learning that will enable them to join our staff bank on completion of their course.

e. The impact of Brexit

The NHS is the largest employer in England, with nearly 1.2 million full-time equivalent (FTE) staff working in hospital and community services. EU nationals make a substantial and highly valued contribution to care at GSTT and Brexit has posed significant risks to Health and Social Care across the UK. Workforce trends and risk have been monitored closely since the referendum in 2016, but with recognition of the fact that Brexit is one part of a complex challenge in growing and retaining our workforce.

London has a diverse workforce; 28% of staff are non-UK Nationals. Since 2016, London's NHS has been twice as more reliant on the EU workforce than England as a whole.

Nationally and in London EU staff have either remained stable or increased marginally between March 2016 and March 2021, whilst during the same period there have been significant increases in international staff recruited from outside of the EU. The position at GSTT is different; over the same time period GSTT has seen similar growth in overseas staff both from within the EU and outside. GSTT currently employ similar numbers of EU and other international staff; (2,129 EU staff and 2040 other non-UK national were working at GSTT in September 2021).

However, when considering Nursing and Midwifery staff group, trends at GSTT are similar to the London and National picture with a sharp increase in international recruitment. In London international non-EU Nursing and Midwifery staff have almost doubled from 8710 in 2016 to 14,463 in 2021 (ESR, March 2021). The South East London sector now has 1600 additional non-EU international Nursing and Midwifery staff since March 2016, whilst the number of EU Nurses has remained the same over this 5 year period.

Historically, international recruitment has always been relied on to supplement local initiatives and in this current climate there is more reliance on overseas staff from outside the EU. Altogether the impact of Brexit needs ongoing management and review with a focus on supporting all our staff and developing a comprehensive workforce strategy for required growth to support patient needs.

f. The SEL Vaccine programme and the introduction of mandatory vaccinations for Health and Social Care workers.

GSTT have taken a lead role in the design and delivery of the South East London vaccine programme. Both Flu (for staff) and Covid vaccines are now being administered in vaccine Pods. We are currently using 4 marquees across GSTT and there are Outreach services up and running to homeless, inpatients, schools, dialysis clinics and community sites for GSTT staff.

South East London has now given 1,426.5k people a first dose of which approx. 1,282.4k had their second dose done, and 224.5k had a booster as well (Total vaccinations given 2,933.4k).

Uptake is generally higher in the outer SEL boroughs of Bexley, Bromley and Greenwich, and lower in the inner SEL boroughs of Lambeth, Lewisham, and Southwark. This aligns with areas of deprivation and ethnicity in respective areas. Work continues to support staff and explore strategies to overcome reduced uptake in specific ethnic groups.

88% of all GSTT staff and 90% of front line staff have now received at the least their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. The uptake varies significantly across different ethnic groups with only 62% of Black Caribbean staff receiving the vaccine compared to 96% White British.

A small number of our staff (56 at the time of writing) whose roles require them to enter care homes have chosen not to take the vaccine. We continue to support staff to make an informed choice and in parallel seek redeployment opportunities.

We await further details following the recent Government announcement on mandating the vaccine for frontline NHS staff.

3. The South East London Integrated Care System

The ambition of the South East London Integrated Care System (SEL ICS) is to deliver a clinically and financially sustainable system for the future, taking collective action to improve outcomes and address health inequalities in our population. Workforce is a key enabler for our vision for care. The formation of the ICS now presents the opportunity to make a step change towards progressing the workforce agenda by taking a different approach that is focussed on national priorities but also borough based local planning to work towards excellence and equity in care.

The population of South East London is 1.9m across the six Boroughs of Bexley, Bromley, Lewisham, Greenwich, Southwark and Lambeth, of which over 314,000 reside in Southwark. The SEL ICS is the second largest in London; the health and social care workforce is made up of 103,000 people.

a. The SEL ICS workforce programme

The SEL ICS workforce programme is supporting workforce growth and transformation across Health and Care through three interconnected priorities of Workforce Supply, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and staff health and wellbeing.

- Borough based relationships are being built to promote effective collaborative working and maximise benefits for our workforce. ICS plans have been shared with Partnership Southwark with agreement to continue discussions and work together.
- Nursing is the largest staff group and central to all areas of health and care. A programme of activity is underway to support the national target of 50,000 more nurses nationally by 2024. The SEL target of 2120 more Nurses by 2024 is being addressed with the ethos of focussing on local priorities across the system.
- SEL ICS enabled a sector wide approach to invest £1.4m in workforce development which met the needs of individual Trusts but also enabled specific investment in core priorities of palliative care, mental health and elective recovery.
- Work is in progress to address workforce challenges in social care. We are working with partners to further define and scope a strategic delivery plan for social care workforce support. An immediate education offer to Nurses working in Social Care has been made initially to share online learning developed for NHS nurses. Further work is needed to develop digital platforms to enable ongoing access to learning material.
- COVID has regenerated interest in working for the NHS and work is in progress to capitalise on this. Over 1500 people were recruited on the SEL vaccine programme through Guys and St Thomas' working in collaboration with partners across SEL. The ICS is now building on this vision of collaborating and working differently, as well as the fundamental need to recruit staff from outside the NHS.

Throughout the pandemic, staff health and wellbeing has been of paramount importance. In addition to the wellbeing offers set out in our partner organisations,

the SEL ICS also has an overarching offer for all staff delivering health and care across the six Boroughs. This is www.keepingwellsel.nhs.uk and offers a wide range of support to staff, ranging from signposting to access to psychological support. The assessment is available in the top 8 languages spoken in South East London and there is an enhanced offer for staff from black, Asian and minority ethnic background, which includes a community forum offer. Since May 2021 over 12,000 health and care have accessed the service.

Due to nature of the service being drop in and confidential, the majority of staff do not declare their employer details or work location however data shows staff from each of our provider organisations in Southwark have accessed the service including one to one psychological support.

4. Conclusion

Our staff are working in an unprecedented context, noting a seismic shift in pressure on the NHS, whilst locally responding to the continued activity fluctuations that the pandemic necessitates, an operational urgency to address the backlog of patients and the heightened acuity of patients presenting. This is combined with each staff member's personal experience of the pandemic and the requirement to continue to work at pace for the foreseeable future.

Through our ICS collaboration, building a 'one workforce' approach across health and social care will improve local employment and better careers. We continue to carefully monitor changes in workforce supply and demand across the system as the longer term impact of Brexit and other labour market dynamic changes resulting from post pandemic emerge. By working in partnership, we will strengthen our resilience to do so.

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Workforce SRO, SELICS**

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