

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 work of the South East London (SEL) ICS workforce programme and actions being taken to support workforce growth, retention and transformation under a robust governance structure with strong partnerships. Specifically, the briefing provides an update on the impact of Brexit on staff recruitment; it also presents a view of the impact of the pandemic with a specific focus on staff morale and well-being. This briefing provides an overview of key insights and core activity supporting the SEL workforce but does not full cover the breadth of work taking place within the SEL workforce programme.

2. South East London ICS Workforce Programme

Friday 1 July 2022, marked the legal establishment of South East London Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the disestablishment of NHS South East London Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). As a newly created statutory body, the ICB will now support and build upon existing health and care partnerships established by our Integrated Care System (ICS) – Our Healthier South East London.

A five year ICS workforce strategy is being published in March 2023, as a key enabler to the ICS priorities of:

1. Improving population health and healthcare
2. Tackling unequal outcomes and access
3. Enhancing productivity and value for money
4. Helping the NHS to support broader social and economic development

This strategy will represent a continued commitment to the growth and development of our “one workforce”, approximately 131,000 people working across all sectors of health and social care (including the voluntary sector). It will build on and expand work that is currently ongoing within the ICS workforce programme to support population health through three fundamental priorities of securing workforce supply, supporting the health and well-being of our staff and ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion is embedded in all we do.

SEL has an established governance overseeing strategy and delivery of workforce objectives. The South East London People Board reports to the ICB and the London People Board. It brings together system leaders and oversees core work to support the ambition of integration across health and care in the six boroughs of the sector. The People Board is responsible for ensuring an effective system response to immediate workforce priorities alongside ensuring strategic and longer-term workforce planning and transformation. The People Board is connected to Collaboratives and Committees that cover the full patient pathway as well as the HR Directors network and Directors of Adult Social Services. Altogether, this supports strong partnerships and leadership.

3. The impact of Brexit

EU nationals make a substantial and highly valued contribution to care 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; approximately 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 2016 and 2022. In SEL, between Sept 2016 and Sept 2022 the EU workforce within NHS Trusts has grown by 20%, and throughout this period EU nationals have made up 10-11% of the total workforce. However, within the Nursing and Midwifery staff group, the EU workforce has declined by 12% from September 2016 to September 2022. This correlates with significant increases in international nurses from outside the EU.

Historically, international recruitment has always been relied on to address workforce gaps and this has increased significantly since 2016. Currently, 19% of the total NHS workforce in SEL hold a nationality from outside of the EU. This workforce, now 10,200WTE, has more than doubled since 2016. Within Nursing and Midwifery staff group the international workforce increased by 2,700WTE whilst the number of European Nurses have reduced by 200WTE (HEE, ESR data set Sept 2022).

These changes in international recruitment are set against ongoing shortages in the workforce. The total British workforce has increased by 4500 WTE (14%) over 7 years and makes up 70% of the total workforce. However, profession specific differences need to be considered. A 3.4% reduction in British Nurses and Midwives in SEL over the same 7 year period, together with London wide increases in international doctors (currently approximately one third of doctors have gained Primary qualification abroad) demonstrates the ongoing need to plan for supporting and growing our workforce.

A focus on staff retention and the need to expand the pipeline of workforce supply is a core strategic priority for the ICS.

4. The impact of the pandemic

Securing workforce supply across Health and Care is pivotal to delivering excellence in health and care. Workforce shortages have been an ongoing challenge further exacerbated by COVID and now also impacted by further pressure on the UK economy and the cost of living crisis.

Workforce gaps across Health and Care and the need to improve on productivity, skill mix and new ways of working are well documented and link to national policy. Staff turnover trends in SEL are similar to those across England. In SEL, NHS turnover was 14-15% before the pandemic this reduced through the COVID pandemic to less than 13% and was lowest one

year after the pandemic. Since February 2021 staff turnover increased rapidly and has risen to 16%. This rate is now steady.

The position in social care is even more challenging with workforce turnover at 26% and a large proportion of staff on zero hours contracts (36%). Pay disparity with independent sector workers being paid over a third less than local authority workers will also impact on staff retention (Skills for Care, 2022).

Staff turnover trends possibly link to staff commitment and increased interest in supporting Health and Care services seen in the pandemic followed by the reported exhaustion and burn out of staff

This section outlines some of the core pressures and the active steps being taken to address recruitment, retention and new ways of working within the ICB as we recover from the pandemic.

4.1- Staff Retention

SEL workforce programme are actively addressing the need to support staff health and well-being and promote retention. A multi-faceted retention strategy runs through the ICS programme. A summary of key activity is as follows:

Staff Health and Wellbeing:

- We have an ICS wide staff health and wellbeing strategy in place (to May 23) and have sustained investments in a universal offer for all SEL health and care staff and levelling up investments.
- Keeping Well in SEL, KWSEL, our staff mental health and wellbeing hub, is a single point of access for SEL health and care staff and provides a wide range of support ranging from signposting to assessment and one to one psychological support www.keepingwellnel.nhs.uk. In terms of portal use, there have been 33,371 new users to the site since its launch in April 2021.
- The assessment element of the wider service was launched in January 2022 and has delivered for the 288 referrals from SEL Health, and Social Care staff received to date. (The assessment is available in the top 8 languages spoken in South East London).
- KWSEL has also expanded its outreach and engagement in the care and voluntary sector, reaching 50 care organisations across all boroughs. Following this outreach, 27 additional support sessions for groups have been scheduled. The service offers web-based resources and advice taking an adaptive approach to meet the needs of our one workforce. Recent examples include a dedicated webpage, support and sign posting for staff affected by the events in Ukraine and surrounding regions.

- A breadth of ‘levelling up’ investments are being enabled through investment including Place based and primary care wellbeing initiatives and a staff Psychology service for Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust employees.
- Our ICS work is also currently focusing on collaboration to reduce incidence and impact of violence, aggression and abuse towards staff, and initial collaborative working between acute providers on Occupational Health provision.

Staff Equality Diversity and Inclusion:

- Since our last update, we have completed and evaluated our ICS level, 12-month Staff Network Development Programme to support and better equip network members and chairs to be more actively engaged in organisation decision making.
- We have also hosted a successful Staff Networks Day event in May attended by 93 people from a breadth of networks across the ICS.
- Over the spring, we have undertaken an important ‘discovery piece’ to help determine the vision and ambition for the ICS Staff EDI Committee. The final report was delivered in July 2022, outlining four priorities for our ongoing collaboration and approach. The priorities are 1. Sharing expertise about what works and what does not. 2. Creating the space for developing bold new thinking 3. Creating a social movement on staff EDI 4. Acting as a critical friend to the ICB. Our Staff EDI work is seeking to foster energy at multiple levels and work to do things differently to create more positive experiences for current and future staff.

Ongoing retention priorities:

- SEL are an exemplar site for the NHSE retention programme. Work is being developed to support flexible working as a key initiative that will retain staff and address workforce gaps. All learning will be shared across Health and Care wherever possible. Targeted focus on Social Care Nurses and the Home Care workforce has also begun.
- Lessons learnt from COVID are paramount. GSTT ran a centralised recruitment for the SEL COVID vaccination programme working in partnership with all other Trusts and with Primary Care. Following mass recruitment of unregistered vaccinators, 1548 are retained in SEL.
- Future utilisation of unregistered roles, reservists and improvements in digital technology features across the evolving workforce strategy

4.2- Recruitment and new ways of working

Recruitment challenges are being addressed within every sector and specialty in a number of ways through education, upskilling and re-designing workforce models. Following the pandemic some of our key cross sector priorities for supporting recruitment are as follows:

- **Community, Mental Health and Acute Provider Collaboratives** are set to ensure provider organisations are jointly setting their approach to workforce planning and transformation to support services. Critically, supporting the operational response through senior collaboration and decision making is key. For example, within the Acute Provider Collaborative this includes CPOs collaborating to facilitate staff movement between sites to support mutual aid and also working to align bank and agency rates where possible.
- **Implementation of a “Health and Care Hub”** that aims to support our local population to access to good jobs. Employment and health are inextricably linked; adults not in employment suffer from poorer physical and mental health. Through a digital platform and direct engagement through our widening participation network this Hub will support local recruitment and also retention through career progression. This work supports our commitment to addressing inequalities and the Anchor agenda. (GLA funding partly confirmed and decision pending on full sum).

Mental Health:

- A Mental Health Workforce Transformation Lead was in post as part of the ICS workforce Programme from November 2021 to May 2022. This role delivered a Primary Care Mental Health Practitioner (MHP) implementation toolkit to support system partners to consider and implement this relatively new role and on behalf of London. A multi-professional Competency Framework for support workers in mental health was developed. The competency framework development has been highly collaborative with key organisations including Bromley, Lewisham & Greenwich (BLG) Mind, Bridge Support, Southwark Council, HEE and NHS colleagues and other London leads. The framework aims to attract people from diverse backgrounds into mental health roles and is supported by a careers and recruitment guide. The content is being translated into a web-based version and a will be launched in the next few months.
- Recognising the workforce challenges extend far beyond community services in mental health, we have recently submitted a bid for funding to develop our strategic and at scale workforce planning and transformation capacity across SEL and develop recommendations for additional known priorities for our system, Children’s and Young People’s Services and Improving Access to Psychological Therapies.

5. Operational response

Whilst a longer term strategy for growth is being developed and delivered, key operational challenges are also being regularly addressed. A critical priority is our response to upcoming industrial action and the potential for more in the new year.

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) recently balloted its members working in the NHS and health and social care on whether to take strike action. The RCN confirmed that the majority of its members have voted to go ahead with strike action. Strike action is planned on the 15th and 20th December. There are regular discussions with RCN to plan and understand the

derogations and what this means in practice for NHS service nationally and for our local services. We are supporting staff through this difficult period and respect the right of staff to take industrial action.

6. Conclusion

Our staff continue to work under an immensely challenging situation given the pressure of COVID recovery plans, within the context of financial pressures and a focus on productivity. The cost of living crisis and upcoming industrial action with the potential for more next year demonstrate the severity and complexity of the current climate. Therefore, a focus on staff well-being is paramount, acknowledging both their personal and professional experiences.

Fundamental to the work of the ICS is to support growth, retention and transformation of our “one workforce” across Health and Care irrespective of employer. Across SEL, teams are working at pace towards an ambitious drive to work collaboratively to support population health in a variety of ways from setting up new services and pathways for care to actively supporting local recruitment. Whilst this work is complex, instilling our values, and ensuring support for all our boroughs will remain central to all we do.

We will carefully monitor changes to workforce supply and the impact of wider policy drivers, the economy and the labour market to deliver an appropriate strategic response working in partnership across our system.

Julie Screaton

Chief People Officer SEL ICB and Guy’s and St Thomas’s NHS Trust

6th December 2022

Annex – Overview of SEL workforce

Partnership Southwark Local Care Partnership

- 319,610 Residents
- 35 GP Practices
- 58 Pharmacies

Lambeth Together LCP

- 327,897 Residents
- 45 GP Practices
- 64 Pharmacies

Lewisham Health and Care LCP

- 309,560 Residents
- 27 GP Practices
- 52 Pharmacies

Healthier Greenwich LCP

- 287,753 Residents
- 36 GP Practices
- 63 Pharmacies

One Bromley LCP

- 330,730 Residents
- 45 GP Practices
- 58 Pharmacies

Bexley LCP

- 247,444 Residents
- 22 GP Practices
- 46 Pharmacies

MH Trusts

- Oxleas
- SLAM

Community Providers

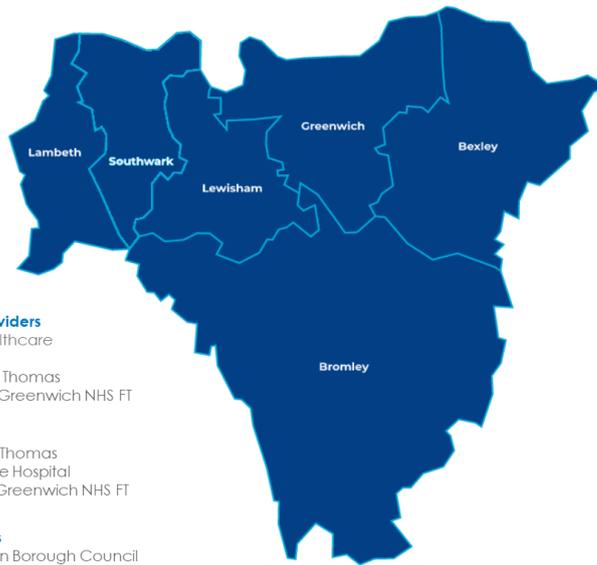
- Bromley Healthcare
- Oxleas
- Guy's and St Thomas
- Lewisham & Greenwich NHS FT

Acute Trusts

- Guy's and St Thomas
- King's College Hospital
- Lewisham & Greenwich NHS FT

Local Authorities

- Bexley London Borough Council
- Lambeth London Borough Council
- Lewisham London Borough Council
- Royal Borough of Greenwich
- Southwark London Borough Council
- London Borough of Bromley



Population 1.9M

Organisation	Headcount
Adult Social Care (Independent sector) -	36,000
Voluntary Sector Employees *(crude split London/5)	31,484
Guy's and St Thomas+	22,188
King's College Hospital +	13,291
Lewisham and Greenwich FT+	6,888
SLAM (also covers Croydon)+	5,526
Oxleas+	3,958
Pharmacy July 22 x	2,457
Adult Social Care (Local Authority's)-	2,400
General practice July 22 +	5,065
Bromley HC (website)	800
SEL ICB	663
Estimated workforce SEL	130,720