

## NHS Confederation

### How would Labour Transform the NHS



- **Chair: Danny Mortimer, NHS Employers Chief Executive of NHS Employers**
- **Paul Williams MP**
- **Cllr Daniel Yates, Chair of City Health and Wellbeing Board, Brighton & Hove**
- **Melanie Walker, Chief Executive Devon Partnership NHS Trust**

Paul Williams began by speaking about the importance of policies coming from a health professional perspective, a commissioning perspective and a provider's perspective. This would require us to look at the transformation we need in our acute services, looking at community based services and the integration between health and social care services. He said that first and foremost, by looking at how policies would work for the patients then we cannot go wrong. Williams spoke of the importance of diagnostic labelling, mentioning how waiting times are increasing with certain groups having to wait much longer than others. He said that those with mental health and learning difficulties take much longer to be seen. He said that different people are doing the assessment for diagnostics, including speech and language therapists, educational psychologists etc. With them all working for different organisations; some commissioned by CCGs, some local authorities, mental health trusts, acute trusts, community trusts etc., fragmentation increases and the Health and Social Care Act has done little to solve this. Williams also criticised the lack of joint up leadership that brings together the elements of health and social care as well as educational services. He said that true integration of health and social care would require joining up data and medical records amongst practices and said that whilst we should be legislating to protect the confidentiality of medical, this information should be shared across all systems. An issue that has arisen is how patients are often unable to see the same professional twice for various reasons, and that as Labour truly value their workforce, they will look to retain high levels of staff to provide a continuity of care for patients. He finished off by stating that Labour plans to make Britain's children the healthiest children in the world.

Melanie Walker credited the Five Year Forward View for mental health, and said that Labour should look to build on that. She said that policies should build on a focus towards the most vulnerable and sick. She said that nationally, there is a difference in mortality rates of about 18 years for men who have mental health problems compared to their peers. She said that a comprehensive approach is needed for integrating health and social care and statistics like the aforementioned need to be considered. Melanie said that if you are diagnosed with cancer or cardiovascular disease as well as mental health then you are twice as likely to die as a result of the disease. She said that the party must shift the focus in a genuine way towards acute general hospitals. She added that we must also look at the relationship between health and primary care. She said that general practices have issues with recruitment, and unless we look at the model of general practices in a different way then we cannot improve and therefore ensure that the NHS is free at the point of use. Walker also stated that in terms of social care, local authority budget cuts have meant that money is not being spent in the right way, with mental health being neglected. She

finished off by saying that there needs to be more of a focus and investment on research and development, particularly surrounding the impact of Brexit. She said that whilst 5.8% of health research is spent on mental health, if we want to make real improvements to this then we will have to work in a different way.

Daniel Yates criticised the lack of depth within Labour's health policy, stating that despite the plans to integrate health and social care, there is little explanation as to how. He said that commissioning is one thing, but delivery being another. He said that there needs to be a clear explanation as to what it will mean; will both health and social care services be free at the point of use? Or will means testing continue throughout. He said that Labour need to be clear on these things to show that they have the competence to take this on. Finally, Yates stated that politicians need to work alongside our clinical commissioning groups to talk about the integration of these services.