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3 July 2020
Dear Colleagues,

As we celebrate the 72nd Birthday of the NHS this weekend, I have been reflecting on the changes not only to the NHS throughout my NHS career, but also at HEE since we were formed as an ALB.

There is no doubt that across health and care we have seen a growing consensus that “workforce” is crucial. People deliver service, and we can’t just “buy” qualified people “off the shelf”. This means we need to plan ahead, despite it being hard to predict how many people we will need and with what skills.

We’re experts in workforce training and development, as well as strategic forward planning, but we can’t do this alone and our collective challenge is complex. We are currently preparing students for jobs that don’t yet exist, using technologies that haven’t been invented, in order to solve problems, we don’t even know are problems yet.

Over recent months we have all witnessed that disruptive change can sometimes be a positive thing. For example, for many years we have increasingly focused on specialist roles within clinical professions. However, the role of a generalist and a greater focus on shared competences rather than professional differences has been key during COVID-19 to the NHS having the ability to respond to the overwhelming numbers of patients requiring treatment and care. This demonstrates how important it is to have a workforce with the right skills, flexibility and adaptability to meet the needs of the NHS whenever it is needed.

Change can be difficult, but we all recognise that we will need both “more and different” people to deliver 21st century care.

At HEE, we’re now seven years old. Over the past 12 months, we have spent considerable time as a Board reviewing where HEE has come from, the new and changing landscape we are now operating in, and proposals for our role and strategic focus going forward.

The disruptive change in 2020 evidences how we’re thinking differently, working collaboratively and sharing our expertise in “workforce” modelling, training, education and redesign, not only in response to COVID-19 but also to reform training and education for the future.

Kind Regards,

Wendy

Wendy Reid

Interim Chief Executive

Health Education England

Posted by Professor Wendy Reid

Source URL (modified on 03/07/2020 - 12:18): https://www.hee.nhs.uk/news-blogs-events/blogs/we-celebrate-72nd-birthday-nhs-weekend-i-have-been-reflecting-changes-not-only-nhs-throughout-my-nhs

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[5] https://www.hee.nhs.uk/about