

Gateway Reference Number: 02254

To:

Chief Executives of NHS Foundation Trusts and NHS Trusts
CCG Clinical Leaders, CCG Accountable Officers

Copy to:

Local Authority Chief Executives

Dear Colleagues

Priorities for the coming months

We are writing jointly to you to:

- invite you to a series of regional meetings we are holding in October/November;
- confirm our expectations regarding NHS performance over the coming months;
- outline the 15/16 planning process;
- update you on our longer term thinking about the NHS.

Autumn events

We are planning a series of events across the country in October/November to provide an opportunity for you to engage with us on a number of important issues facing the NHS. These events will be held in regions on the following dates:

- London: 10.00am-1.00pm, 28 October
- South: 1.30-4.30pm, 28 October
- Midlands & East: 10.00am-1.00pm, 31 October
- North: 1.30-4.30pm, 4 November

Further information will be circulated shortly, but we would ask you to hold these dates in your diaries in the meantime.

Working together to deliver NHS performance over the coming months

We recognise that our three organisations need to work very closely together, both at national and regional level, in order to provide strategic leadership and support to NHS organisations across the country. We have agreed to establish a strengthened partnership across our organisations so that we can take a joined-up view of the challenges facing the NHS, and the potential solutions available. This will include developing a common approach to escalation across our organisations.

In turn, we ask you to work collaboratively with your local partners to deliver the best possible health services to your patients. This will require your personal leadership at local level.

It is clear that in the first five months of 2014/15, the NHS has experienced very high demand for many services which is making delivery of consistently high quality, safe care ever more challenging. We recognise the outstanding efforts that you are making across the NHS to continue delivering care to the standards set out in the NHS Constitution.

It is essential that you continue to focus on meeting the NHS Constitution standards and take rapid action to improve performance where these standards are not being met. Patients consistently tell us that prompt access to services is important to them and an essential ingredient of good patient care. Our expectation is that performance against the following standards will be recovered so that they are all met consistently:

- the A&E 4 hour standard;
- the 18 week wait standards: RTT admitted, non-admitted and incomplete standards. 52+ week waiters must be virtually eliminated except where there is an agreed clinical reason for the patient to wait. In addition, we need to deliver a reduction in the number of patients waiting over 18 weeks. (Acknowledging the current focus on treatment of long waiters, we are expecting the extra elective activity to be delivered by the end of November and the 18 week wait standards to be met consistently thereafter).
- diagnostics 6 week wait standard;
- all cancer wait standards (with the exception of the 62 day referral to treatment standard, which we expect to be met from November onwards);
- ambulance response standards.

We recognise that it will be challenging to improve and sustain performance for the remainder of 2014/15 and want to emphasise the importance of all partners working together to secure delivery. Our three organisations will work together to do everything we can to support you.

As you know, we have committed significant resources in-year to fund additional elective activity and to support preparations for winter. We anticipate that these resources will play a significant role in helping you to deliver these standards and we will be working closely with you to ensure that these resources are deployed to best effect.

Planning for 15/16

In early December, we will be publishing planning guidance for 2015/16. The guidance will set out how the NHS budget will be invested in the coming year to drive continuous improvement. The overarching objectives of the planning round for 2015/16 will be to:

- refresh the second year of the existing two-year operational plans with a focus on making sure that the plans are as realistic as possible;

- secure alignment across NHS England's commissioner planning process and Monitor and NTDA's provider planning processes;
- establish a foundation for longer term planning, based on the NHS Five Year Forward View (see below);
- minimise the burden and opportunity cost for commissioners and providers of completing the planning returns;
- add value by identifying and resolving contradictions and inconsistencies between the financial and activity elements of commissioners' and providers' plans;
- identify the framework through which CCGs and individuals can take on more responsibility for commissioning a greater range of services, and
- model collective system leadership through joint working with partners.

We are expecting commissioners and providers to work closely together over the next six months to develop the best possible set of plans for 2015/16. We urge you to work together to develop aligned plans and collective risk management arrangements.

The NHS Forward View

The future challenges faced by the health service have been well-rehearsed: changing health needs, rising expectations and constrained public resources combine to make the coming years a crucial inflection point for the NHS. We plan to publish a Five Year Forward View for the NHS in October that will set out how the health service and its partners can rise to these challenges. The NHS Forward View will seek to influence the national debate by outlining the challenges and choices for further discussion.

We want to discuss the NHS Forward View with you and explore how it might be helpful to you in your local health economies.

The three of us jointly look forward to meeting with you soon.

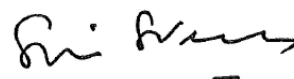
Yours sincerely



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Monitor



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