

NHS England
Skipton House
80 London Road
London
SE1 6LH

19 July 2018

To: *(by email)*

Health and Wellbeing Board Chairs
Local Authority Chief Executives
Clinical Commissioning Group Accountable Officers

Dear Colleagues

THE INTEGRATION AND BETTER CARE FUND OPERATING GUIDANCE FOR 2017-19

I am writing to you today to let you know that The Integration and Better Care Fund (BCF) Operating Guidance for 2017-19 has been published and is now available at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/better-care-fund-operating-guidance-for-2017-19/>

The BCF continues to hold a unique position of formally bringing local partners together to agree their plans for integrating health and social care by supporting: personalisation, co-ordination of care and assisting people with long term needs to remain closer to home. You will have seen that the Government's recent announcements on future funding for the NHS make integration of health and social care one of the priorities to be delivered with this additional resource. The services and relationships developed through the BCF across the country provide a firm footing to deliver this expectation.

The attached updated Operating Guidance provides the framework for the ongoing requirements of the BCF as you continue to implement your plans for 2017-19 that were approved last year. The Guidance also sets out the ways in which plans can be reviewed and how metrics for 2018-19 can be refreshed, particularly in relation to Residential admissions and Reablement.

In addition, the Guidance sets out the requirements, agreed with the Department of Health and Social Care and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in consultation with Local Government, for reducing Delayed Transfers of Care (DToC) in 2018-19, which should be adopted as metrics in your local BCF plan. These replace the expectations set for 2017-18 in the BCF Planning Requirements. Based on the national ambition, departments and NHS England have agreed updated expectations for each local BCF plan for 2018-19, in consultation with national partners, including the LGA, and Better Care Managers.

The expectations for Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWB) have been set using an updated baseline (Q3 2017-18) and the scale of the expected reduction will be set according to the distance each area is from the national target rate – with areas further away from this rate expected to contribute a larger reduction. HWB areas are expected to adopt the DToC metric expectations as set for 2018/19.

A detailed explanation of the methodology used to determine the expectations is provided in the Operating Guidance. The expectations for each HWB accompany this letter as a separate document, which also sets out a process for areas to raise issues with the Q3 2017-18 baseline figures used. Please note that the deadline for this process is 3 August 2018. The final DToC expectations will be subsequently published on the gov.uk website.

Areas should plan based on the assumption that the expectation will be met from September and that this level will be maintained or exceeded thereafter. We are expecting that a revised guide on counting DToC will be published in the coming months for implementation in October 2018. The guidance will provide greater clarity on the process for recording and attributing delayed transfers, with a view to reducing the degree of variation in recording that currently exists across the country. It will be important that all areas follow this revised DToC counting guidance from this point as it will ensure that performance in managing DToC from the end of September is on the same basis across the country.

I want to acknowledge the progress made in your HWB in managing Delayed Transfers of Care. The most recent figures show that your area is below the nationally set expectation for reducing DToC set for September 2018. This is positive news and I commend you for the ongoing partnership working that has enabled this.

Although your BCF plan is set for two years, if there are any major changes to your plans these should be discussed, in the first instance, with your Better Care Manager who will advise on any formal reassurance that might be required. This process is also set out in the new Operating Guidance.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have recently set out their ambition for a reducing the number of people in hospital who experience an extended stay (21

days or over) by 25% to reduce patient harm and bed occupancy. NHS England and NHS Improvement have asked trusts and CCGs to work with local government partners to agree local sectoral ambitions to achieve this reduction and free up at least 4,000 beds compared to 2017-18 by December 2018. BCF plans will support delivery of this reduction through the continuing focus on delivery of the local DToC expectations and through the implementation of national condition four – the High Impact Change model. Particular focus in relation to length of stay should be given to the implementation of the HICM in relation to systems to monitor patient flow, seven day services and trusted assessors (changes two, five and seven).

I also encourage you to share information on schemes and good practice on what you are doing by way of “what’s working” both formally and informally.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neil Permain', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Neil Permain
Director of NHS Operations and Delivery and SRO for the Better Care Fund