

**Publications Gateway Reference No.  
04132**

Commissioning Operations  
NHS England  
Room 4N06, Quarry House  
Leeds  
LS2 7UE

**To:**  
CCG Clinical Leaders

**Copy to:**  
CCG Accountable Officers

28 October 2015

Dear colleagues

### **Primary Care Transformation Fund – Approach to Funding 2016 to 2019**

In December 2014, we announced the availability of £1bn over four years to improve access and the range of services available in primary care, through investment in premises, technology, the workforce and support for working at scale across practices. The first tranche of this fund is being deployed in 2015/16 to support a range of initiatives, including hundreds of schemes from individual practices to improve their estate.

We now want to set out the arrangements for this fund for 2016/17 and beyond. To send a clear signal that the fund is designed to improve services for patients it will be known as the Primary Care Transformation Fund.

The bulk of the fund will be deployed to improve estates and accelerate digital and technological developments in general practice, and will be subject to an initial bidding process. This letter is to invite you to make recommendations to NHS England to support the funding of improvements or developments in practices in your CCG area, by the **end of February 2016**.

The recommendations will need to demonstrate that they meet one or more of the criteria set out below:

- increased capacity for primary care services out of hospital;
- commitment to a wider range of services as set out in your commissioning intentions to reduce unplanned admissions to hospital;
- improving seven day access to effective care;
- increased training capacity.

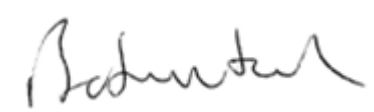
CCG recommendations should reflect the local estates strategies that are being developed for December 2015. They should demonstrate engagement across the local health economy.

CCGs should also produce phased funding plans (limited to 31 March 2019) for recommended developments, which take into account their long-term affordability.

If you have any questions about this approach, please e-mail [england.gppremisesfund@nhs.net](mailto:england.gppremisesfund@nhs.net).

Please note that the team will not be able to address queries from individual practices.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barbara Hakin', enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

**Dame Barbara Hakin**  
**National Director: Commissioning Operations**

## **Primary Care Transformation Fund – Approach to funding 2016 to 2019**

### **Questions and Answers**

#### ***How will CCGs submit their bids for funding to NHS England?***

CCGs should submit proposals to NHS England in February 2016 requesting financial support for investment in premises or technology which will increase the capacity of general practice and out-of-hospital care. By mid-December we will publish further information about the process for submission and criteria which will be used to assess proposals by late spring 2016.

#### ***What is the deadline for CCGs to submit bids?***

The deadline for submitting proposals will be by the end of February 2016. The final date will be confirmed in December, along with details of how to submit proposals.

#### ***What criteria will NHS England use to determine which bids can receive funding?***

The purpose of the fund is to help general practice increase the capacity of services so that patients can access a wider range of clinical services. We are encouraging proposals which create additional capacity for patient care, harness technology which helps to improve patient care or enable innovation in patient care. Proposals which will support improved training for clinical staff will also be welcomed.

Detailed assessment criteria will be published in December along with details of how to submit proposals.

#### ***I'm a GP or practice manager. How can I submit a bid for funding?***

CCGs are producing local estates plans which will take account of the services that are required and planned for the future. These plans should take account of patient and population needs, current services and infrastructure and the needs for the future. In doing so, CCGs should gather views from providers and other stakeholders including general practices.

CCGs have been asked to submit proposals for PCTF support for premises and technology developments, so practices should ensure they have contacted their CCGs to discuss local plans. We are unable to receive bids directly from practices.

#### ***How much funding is available in next year?***

Final decisions about funding will depend on the number of bids received from CCGs in February.

#### ***When will I hear back from NHS England about whether or not our bids are successful?***

We expect to announce which bids have been successful by late spring 2016. These schemes will then be considered for formal approval.

All schemes, if supported in principle, will have to complete a process of formal approval in line with standing financial instructions and legislation.

***The approval process has been slow this year. What have you done to improve it so that developments can progress?***

The formal approval process necessarily requires the confirmation of detailed elements of each proposal, including the technical requirements, planning permissions and financial profiling. We have reviewed the approvals process and how it is implemented so that it is more efficient and effective. Further details will be provided in late spring 2016.

***This year most of the schemes were funded as improvement grants under the Premises Costs Directions. What about next year?***

While most of the 2015/16 bids were for improvements to existing practices, we expect that many of the current bids will be for more strategic premises developments.

We are currently in the process of amending the Premises Costs Directions to include the provision to provide capital contributions for premises developments as well as improvements.

***What about IT?***

The fund will support IT and technology projects as well as premises developments. We encourage CCGs to submit such proposals where they meet the criteria laid out in the letter to CCGs.

***Last year NHS England only supported projects that could be completed within a year. Does this constraint still exist?***

No. It is acknowledged that complex schemes and in particular those that require new buildings will take more than one year to approve and complete. Projects will need to be completed by 31 March 2019. In their bids, CCGs will need to show how funding will be phased across different years.