

NHS England and NHS Improvement  
Skipton House  
80 London Road  
London  
SE1 6LH

25 March 2021

**To:**

- Chief executives of all NHS trusts and foundation trusts
- CCG accountable officers
- GP practices and primary care networks
- Providers of community health services
- NHS 111 providers

**CC:**

- NHS regional directors
- Regional incident directors
- Regional heads of EPRR
- Chairs of ICSs and STPs
- Chairs of NHS trusts, foundation trusts and CCG governing bodies
- Local authority chief executives and directors of adult social care
- Chairs of local resilience forums

Dear Colleagues,

**NHS response to COVID-19: Transition to NHS level 3 incident**

Thank you for the remarkable work you and your staff continue to do to support the NHS response to COVID-19, while now working to recover NHS services and deliver the vaccination programme.

Since the peak of COVID demand in late January, we have seen overall cases of COVID-19 in England steadily decline, with pressures on bed occupancy and critical care reducing accordingly.

At the NHS England public board meeting this afternoon NHS Chief Executive Sir Simon Stevens therefore announced that the national incident level for the NHS COVID-19 response will now be reduced from level 4 to level 3, effective today.

**While we will continue to maintain a national incident infrastructure, this will shift the management of the incident from nationally co-ordinated to a regional level. This mirrors how we operated during the summer of 2020.**

This change to a level 3 incident, and associated changes to expectations on reporting and sharing of data, are intended to support system and regional teams as you increasingly focus on individual, organisational and service recovery.

COVID-19 will likely remain endemic for some time to come. Local systems and networks should therefore continue to identify and implement learning from the response to date to build resilience ahead of potential demand on our services and in advance of next winter.

Local outbreaks and variants of concern will continue to be closely monitored. Given the continued uncertainty, we will keep the situation under close review, retaining the option to revert to a level 4 incident as required.

### **Implications of transition to NHS level 3 incident**

The implications of the transition from a level 4 to level 3 incident are as follows:

- **Oversight:** Transition from a national command, control and co-ordination structure to a regional command, control and co-ordination structure but with national oversight as this remains an incident of international concern.
- **Reporting:** Requirements for reporting for COVID-19, and EU Exit will be adjusted in line with the change in incident level as follows. Full details of changes for other individual collections are included in Annex A.
  - **Weekend COVID sitrep collections** – over Easter Weekend the deadline for all three submissions will be 11:00 on Monday 5 April. Subsequent weekends – collections will open as usual, but the deadline for Saturday and Sunday data will be 11am on the Monday.
  - **EU Exit sitrep collections** – arrangements for acute/ mental health trusts will be the same as for the COVID sit rep above as these are integrated collections. CCG data collections for EU Exit will be stood down completely from Thursday 1 April. Any issues raised by CCGs should be sent by email to the relevant incident coordination centre who will alert the national team as required.

- Please note that additional reporting may be required for those areas of the country experiencing community outbreaks.
- **Incident co-ordination functions:** National and regional incident co-ordination centres remain in place. **NHS organisations must fully retain incident co-ordination functions.**
  - All information related to COVID-19 will continue to go via established COVID-19 incident management channels, with NHS organisations not expected to respond to incident instructions received outside of these channels.
- **Communications:** This incident continues to have an international and national profile and it is important that our information to the public is accurate, clear and consistent. Please therefore continue to co-ordinate communications with your regional communications team.

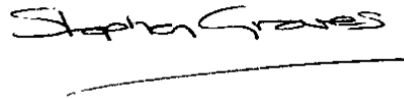
We would both like to thank you again for all your work in support of the COVID-19 response to date.

Best wishes,



**Professor Keith Willett**  
NHS Strategic Incident Director

NHS England and NHS Improvement



**Stephen Groves**  
Incident Director

NHS England and NHS Improvement

## ANNEX A: COVID-19 AND UEC DAILY DATA COLLECTIONS – WEEKEND AND EASTER WORKING

The table below lists further detail on collections and, for each one, describes the way in which data will be collected over weekends, including Easter and the May bank holidays:

Collection Name	Changes to weekend collections
<p>COVID-19 daily sitreps (including NHS Acute, NHS Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism (MHLDA), Independent Sector (IS) Acute and IS MHLDA)</p>	<p>Weekend of 27/28 March – collection will continue over the weekend as usual</p> <p>Easter weekend – Collections will open as usual at 08:00 on 2, 3 and 4 April but the deadline for all three submissions will be 11:00 on Monday 5 April. The collection on 5 April will open at 08:00 on 5 April, and the deadline for submission will be 11:00 on 5 April.</p> <p>Subsequent weekends – collections will open as usual at 08:00 on Saturday and Sunday but the deadline for both submissions will be 11:00 on Monday. Monday’s collection will open at 08:00 Monday morning and will also have a deadline of 11:00 on Monday.</p> <p>Subsequent weekends with a bank holiday Monday - collections will open as usual at 08:00 on Saturday, Sunday and Monday but the deadline for all three submissions will be 11:00 on Tuesday. Tuesday’s collection will open at 08:00 Tuesday morning and will also have a deadline of 11:00 on Tuesday.</p>
<p>Daily discharge collections (including acute and community)</p>	<p>Easter weekend – collection will open as usual at 08:00 on 2, 3, 4 and 5 April but the deadline for all four submissions will be 11:00 on Tuesday 6 April. The collection on 6 April will open at 08:00 on 6 April, and the deadline for submission will be 11:00 on 6 April.</p> <p>Other weekends – collections will continue as currently – i.e. collections open at 08:00 on Saturday and Sunday but the deadline for both submissions is 11:00 on Monday. Monday’s collection opens at 08:00 Monday morning and</p>

	<p>will also have a deadline of 11:00 on Monday.</p> <p>Subsequent weekends with a bank holiday Monday - collections will open as usual at 08:00 on Saturday, Sunday and Monday but the deadline for all three submissions will be 11:00 on Tuesday. Tuesday's collection will open at 08:00 Tuesday morning and will also have a deadline of 11:00 on Tuesday.</p>
UEC sitrep	<p>Weekend of 27/28 March – collection will continue over the weekend as usual.</p> <p>Easter weekend – collection will continue over this weekend as usual – i.e. submissions expected on each of the 4 days of the bank holiday weekend.</p> <p>Subsequent weekends - collections will open as usual on Saturday and Sunday but the deadline for submissions of data for collections opening on Saturday, Sunday and Monday will be 11:00 on Monday.</p> <p>Subsequent weekends with a bank holiday Monday - collections will open as usual on Saturday, Sunday and the Monday but the deadline for submissions of data for collections opening Saturday, Sunday and Monday will be 11:00 on the bank holiday Monday as normal.</p>

Please note that any collections not specifically referenced in this letter will continue unchanged for now and should there be a need to make further changes to the deadlines for the above collections, or any other collections, we will send out further correspondence.