

**Technical Guidance  
Refreshing NHS plans  
for 2018/19**

**Published by NHS England and NHS Improvement**

**Technical Guidance for Refreshing NHS plans for 2018/19**

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## 1 Introduction

The NHS already has two-year contracts and improvement priorities set for the period 2017/19. These were based on the NHS Operational Planning and Contracting Guidance 2017-2019 published in September 2016 and reflected in the March 2017 document [Next Steps on the NHS Five Year Forward View](#).

The November 2017 budget announced additional NHS revenue funding of £1.6 billion for 2018/19 which will increase funding for emergency & urgent care and elective surgery. In addition, for other core frontline services such as mental health and primary care, the Department of Health and Social Care is making a further £540 million available through the Mandate over the coming financial year. The joint NHS England and NHS Improvement updated [guidance](#) sets out how these funds will be distributed and the expectations for commissioners and providers in updating their operational plans for 2018/19.

Given that two-year contracts are in place, 2018/19 will be a refresh of plans already prepared. This will enable organisations to continue to work together through STPs to develop system-wide plans that reconcile and explain how providers and commissioners will collaborate to improve services and manage within their collective budgets.

All commissioners (CCGs and direct commissioning including specialised) and all providers are required to submit a full suite of operating plan returns to the deadlines in the national timetable and also adhere to the contract variation deadlines and processes. The suite of documents in the technical planning guidance has been updated as necessary to support the submission of templates, to ensure plans are completed on a consistent basis and to a high standard.

## 2 Support, Review and Assurance for 2018/2019 Operational Plans

The refreshed operational plans of each commissioner and provider will need to be approved by its individual Board or Governing body.

NHS England and NHS Improvement will again undertake a joint assurance process, working with local organisations in a coherent and joined-up way.

This joint assurance approach will focus on:

- Ensuring plans are stretching and realistic, and show a bottom line position consistent with the control totals set by NHS England and NHS Improvement;
- Ensuring milestones and deliverables are clear;
- Plans are the product of partnership working across STPs, with clear triangulation between commissioner and provider plans and related contracts to ensure alignment in activity, workforce and income and expenditure assumptions – and with assurance from STP leaders that this is the case whilst ensuring the updated plans and contracts are aligned between commissioners and providers;

- That plans are directly derived from the projections agreed within system STPs and reflect historic growth levels moderated by agreed transformation and efficiency schemes. They enable agreed performance trajectories to be delivered within available financial resources;
- Whether plans include appropriate phasing profiles to reflect seasonal changes in demand, especially related to winter, and ensuring efficiency savings are not back-loaded into the later part of the financial year.
- Operating plans need to show an integrated demand and capacity plan for elective and non-elective. This is underpinned by a bed plan, and a staffing plan. They should be completely aligned.
- That risks inside and outside of the direct control of the organisation are identified and mitigated. This involves considering both the assumptions in individual plans and the shared understanding across the system in terms of how the system will work together to manage risks, and,
- Focus on the assurance of system plans for integrated care systems.

## 2.1 Joint data collections

To ensure coherence of plans across the system, activity and finance assumptions made by providers and commissioners should be consistent. For the 2018/19 planning refresh, commissioners and providers will provide aligned planning information to NHS England and NHS Improvement respectively. Information from these collections should be shared locally between commissioners and providers, allowing transparency and understanding of common data and enabling alignment of plans.

Building on the 2017/18 in-year contract alignment approach, we will be asking STP leaders to return a 2018/19 contract and plan alignment template to demonstrate that updated 2018/19 plans and contracts are aligned financially between commissioners and providers.

Support is available from regional NHS England and NHS Improvement teams to help organisations make progress and resolve outstanding issues. The NHS Standard Contract sets out clear rules relating to the updating of a contract for a second year, and the expectation of NHS England and NHS Improvement is therefore that there should be no disputes between commissioners and providers about these variations. Where commissioners and providers fail to reach timely agreement the dispute resolution process in the contract should be followed. The dispute resolution guidance at **Annex C** provides detailed advice about the rules within the Contract on varying a contract in its second year and sets out the expert determination process.

### 3 Key Planning Advice Contacts

#### NHS England

NHS England central team will be contactable via email at [england.ops-planning@nhs.net](mailto:england.ops-planning@nhs.net) Regional colleagues should be contacted in the first instance using the contact details in the table below.

Location	Email address
North of England	<a href="mailto:england.planning-north@nhs.net">england.planning-north@nhs.net</a>
Midlands and East	<a href="mailto:england.me-ops@nhs.net">england.me-ops@nhs.net</a>
London	<a href="mailto:england.londonsubmissions@nhs.net">england.londonsubmissions@nhs.net</a>
South of England	<a href="mailto:england.operations-south@nhs.net">england.operations-south@nhs.net</a>

#### NHS Improvement

The main contact point for providers will be through the regional teams. The names and contact details are set out in the table below. Any queries should be directed to your usual regional team contact.

Location	Email address
North of England	<a href="mailto:NHSI.planningnorth@nhs.net">NHSI.planningnorth@nhs.net</a>
Midlands and East	<a href="mailto:NHSI.planningmande@nhs.net">NHSI.planningmande@nhs.net</a>
London	<a href="mailto:NHSI.planninglondon@nhs.net">NHSI.planninglondon@nhs.net</a>
South of England	<a href="mailto:NHSI.planningsouth@nhs.net">NHSI.planningsouth@nhs.net</a>

The leads at NHSI in relation to specific technical elements of the operating plans are set out in the table below.

Operating plan element	Email address
Quality	<a href="mailto:NHSI.clinicalquality@nhs.net">NHSI.clinicalquality@nhs.net</a>
Workforce	<a href="mailto:NHSI.workforce@nhs.net">NHSI.workforce@nhs.net</a>
Performance & activity	<a href="mailto:NHSI.returns@nhs.net">NHSI.returns@nhs.net</a>
Finance	<a href="mailto:NHSI.finplan@nhs.net">NHSI.finplan@nhs.net</a>
Capital and cash	<a href="mailto:NHSI.capitalcashqueries@nhs.net">NHSI.capitalcashqueries@nhs.net</a>

### 4 Directory for 2017/18-2018/19 operational plans

A brief description of each annex is provided in this section along with a note of any significant changes to the document from last year. The expectations for the content of operational plans are described more fully in **Annex E** for commissioners and **Annex F** for providers.

Two annexes have been removed as part of the update of the Technical Guidance for NHS planning 2017/18 – 2018/19. The joint contract tracker is not being used in 2018/19 (the guidance for the STP led contract and plan alignment template that

replaces the contract tracker is incorporated within the template) and guidance for completion of commissioner finance templates has been incorporated in a different format.

A number of documents previously shown on the NHS England planning web page as linked publications and information are now incorporated as annexes.

## 4.1 Annexes to the Technical Guidance

### Annex A - Information on CQUIN

<b>Link:</b>	<a href="https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/cquin-indicator-specification/">https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/cquin-indicator-specification/</a>
<b>Audience:</b>	CCGs, NHS Trust and NHS Foundation Trusts
<b>Purpose:</b>	To outline the CQUIN scheme
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance for the scheme 2018-2019</li> <li>• Detailed information on the indicator definitions</li> </ul>
<b>Publication Date:</b>	9 April 2018
<b>Changes to document:</b>	Changes are summarised in the annex document

### Annex B - Information on Quality Premium

<b>Link:</b>	<a href="https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/technical-guidance-annex-b-information-on-quality-premium/">https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/technical-guidance-annex-b-information-on-quality-premium/</a>
<b>Audience:</b>	CCGs and Regions
<b>Purpose:</b>	To outline the Quality Premium scheme to CCGs
<b>Content:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance for the scheme 2018-2019</li> <li>• Detailed information on indicator definitions</li> </ul>
<b>Publication Date:</b>	9 April 2018
<b>Changes to document:</b>	Changes are summarised in the annex document

**Annex C - Joint Contract Dispute Resolution**

<b>Link:</b>	<a href="https://www.england.nhs.uk/planning-guidance">https://www.england.nhs.uk/planning-guidance</a>
<b>Audience:</b>	CCGs, direct commissioning teams, NHS Trusts and NHS Foundation Trusts
<b>Purpose:</b>	To provide the process of the dispute resolution process
<b>Content:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two documents providing Information on the Contract Dispute Resolution Process</li> </ul>
<b>Publication Date:</b>	23 February 2018
<b>Changes to document:</b>	New guidance document on the process for updating two year contracts 2018/19

**Annex D – NHS England Guidance for Financial Business Rules**

<b>Link:</b>	<a href="https://www.england.nhs.uk/planning-guidance">https://www.england.nhs.uk/planning-guidance</a>
<b>Audience:</b>	CCGs, NHS England direct commissioning teams
<b>Purpose:</b>	Sets out the business rules and the requirements for completion of the financial planning templates
<b>Content:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of business rules and financial planning requirements</li> </ul>
<b>Publication Date:</b>	23 February 2018
<b>Changes to document:</b>	New annex. Business rules were formerly set out in the CCG Guidance for Operational and Activity Plans. The full document should be reviewed

**Annex E – NHS England CCG Guidance for Operational and Activity Plans: UNIFY submissions**

<b>Link:</b>	<a href="https://www.england.nhs.uk/planning-guidance">https://www.england.nhs.uk/planning-guidance</a>
<b>Audience:</b>	CCGs, NHS England direct commissioning teams
<b>Purpose:</b>	Sets out the operational planning measures and explains the requirements for completion of the Monthly activity planning templates
<b>Content:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A table setting out the full range of operational planning measures, including NHS Constitution standards.</li> <li>• Information on Direct Commissioning</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of template requirements for plans</li> <li>• Activity Planning</li> </ul>
<b>Publication Date:</b>	23 February 2018
<b>Changes to document:</b>	New document

### Annex F - NHS Improvement Guidance for Operational and Activity Plans

<b>Link:</b>	<a href="https://www.england.nhs.uk/planning-guidance">https://www.england.nhs.uk/planning-guidance</a>
<b>Audience:</b>	NHS Foundation Trusts and NHS Trusts
<b>Purpose:</b>	To clarify the main elements that should be included within operational plans produced by providers and to detail the approach to be taken by NHS Improvement in reviewing them
<b>Content:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objectives for 2017-18 and 2018-19 operational plans</li> <li>• Requirements of provider operational plans</li> <li>• Summary of operational plan submissions</li> <li>• Guidance on operational plan narrative</li> <li>• Approach to review of provider operational plans</li> </ul>
<b>Publication Date:</b>	22 September 2016
<b>Changes to document:</b>	This guidance should now be read in conjunction with the updated joint NHS England and NHS Improvement 2018/19 planning guidance and the updated 2018/19 technical guidance provided on the NHS Improvement website

### Annex G – National Tariff

<b>Link:</b>	<a href="https://improvement.nhs.uk/resources/national-tariff-1719/">https://improvement.nhs.uk/resources/national-tariff-1719/</a>
<b>Audience:</b>	CCGs, NHS Trust and NHS Foundation Trusts
<b>Content:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publication of National Tariff Prices</li> </ul>
<b>Changes to document:</b>	Final National Tariff documents were published in December 2016

**Annex H – NHS Standard Contract**

<b>Link:</b>	<a href="https://www.england.nhs.uk/nhs-standard-contract/">https://www.england.nhs.uk/nhs-standard-contract/</a>
<b>Audience:</b>	CCGs, direct commissioning teams, NHS Foundation Trusts and NHS Trusts, commissioners and providers who are party to an NHS Standard Contract'
<b>Content:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The NHS Standard Contract is published by NHS England and is mandated for use by CCGs and NHS England for all clinical services contracts, with the exception of those for primary care services</li> </ul>
<b>Publication date:</b>	3 January 2018
<b>Changes to document:</b>	No change

**Annex I - Specialised Commissioning Intentions**

<b>Link:</b>	<a href="https://www.england.nhs.uk/planning-guidance">https://www.england.nhs.uk/planning-guidance</a>
<b>Audience:</b>	NHS Foundation Trusts, NHS Trusts and Independent sector providers of specialised services, NHS England direct commissioners, CCGs, Suppliers of medical devices, drugs, diagnostics and other healthcare interventions
<b>Content:</b>	<p>Provides notice to healthcare providers and partners about changes and planned developments in the commissioning and delivery of specialised services, informing contracts, STP and organisation specific business plans, covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National intentions, national priorities for the six programmes of care (Mental Health, Cancer, Blood &amp; Infection, Internal Medicine, Women's &amp; Children's, Trauma) and specific priorities for London, North, Midlands and East, South regions.</li> <li>Detail about how the new strategic framework for specialised commissioning will enable place and population based care</li> <li>Changes approved by ministers to prescribe new services as specialised and the national adoption of new information rules</li> <li>Commissioning processes supporting the Carter Review implementation including reform to locally priced services, utilisation management, medicines optimisation, medical device supply chain, high cost drugs reimbursement and data flows.</li> <li>Priorities for national and regional strategic service reviews which will reshape care provision in key services, and support implementation of national strategies in cancer, mental health and for patient with learning disabilities.</li> <li>Priorities for clinical policy and service specification development,</li> </ul>

	payment reform, quality improvement and peer review.
<b>Changes to document:</b>	No change

## Annex J – 2017–2019 Prescribed Services CQUIN Schemes

### Specialised CQUIN Scheme Guidance for 2017-19

<b>Link:</b>	<a href="https://www.england.nhs.uk/nhs-standard-contract/cquin/pres-cquin-17-19/">https://www.england.nhs.uk/nhs-standard-contract/cquin/pres-cquin-17-19/</a>
<b>Audience:</b>	NHS Foundation Trusts, NHS Trusts and Independent sector providers of specialised services, particularly clinical service leads. NHS England direct commissioners
<b>Content:</b>	<p>Sets out the CQUIN scheme for Prescribed Specialised Services (PSS) for the two year period from April 2017 to March 2019.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NHS England will invest almost £600m through the Specialised CQUIN scheme in the next two years</li> <li>• Some CQUINs apply across acute or mental health services, but many are service specific, by programme of care</li> <li>• To ensure sufficient time to deliver change, PSS CQUIN schemes are again multi-year, with most CQUINs continuing from 2016/17. New schemes are designed for implementation over two years</li> </ul>
<b>Publication date:</b>	November 2016
<b>Changes to document:</b>	No change

### Specialised Commissioning CQUIN

<b>Link:</b>	<a href="https://www.england.nhs.uk/nhs-standard-contract/cquin/pres-cquin-17-19/">https://www.england.nhs.uk/nhs-standard-contract/cquin/pres-cquin-17-19/</a>
<b>Audience:</b>	NHS Foundation Trusts, NHS Trusts and Independent sector providers of specialised services, particularly clinical service leads. NHS England direct commissioners
<b>Content:</b>	<p>Sets out Specialised Commissioning CQUIN guide and scheme templates, which are the basis of a provider-specific package of incentives offered to each contracted healthcare provider of specialised services. The scheme sets out goals for change, how improvements for patients will be rewarded, and how success will be measured:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The scheme retains multi-year CQUINs introduced in 2016/17</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of CQUINs per contract is proportionate to the financial value of CQUIN investment, with up to 10 schemes for the largest providers of services</li> <li>• As now, Hepatitis C network lead providers will earn up to 2.8%, other acute providers 2.0% and mental health providers 2.5%</li> <li>• Incentive payments have been increased from 'typical provider cost plus 25%' to 'plus 50%' rather than fixed percentages of contract, so financial rewards relate to the scale of patient benefits.</li> </ul>
<b>Publication date:</b>	22 September 2016
<b>Changes to document:</b>	Any revisions to documents will be noted on the PSS CQUIN Schemes web page as they are made.

### Annex K - Better Care Fund Planning Requirements

<b>Link:</b>	<a href="https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/integration-and-better-care-fund-planning-requirements-for-2017-19/">https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/integration-and-better-care-fund-planning-requirements-for-2017-19/</a>
<b>Audience:</b>	CCGs, Local Authorities
<b>Purpose:</b>	Confirms planning requirements of commissioners in CCGs and Local Authorities in order to release funding ring-fenced in CCG budgets into Section 75 pooled funding agreements
<b>Content:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirmation of planning requirements for BCF plans</li> <li>• More detailed guidance on the National Conditions for the Better Care Fund, set by government through the policy framework</li> <li>• Assurance process and timescales for BCF plans</li> <li>• Detailed definitions and guidance for setting expectations for the four national metrics for the BCF</li> </ul>
<b>Publication date:</b>	4 July 2017
<b>Changes to document:</b>	No change

### Annex L - Better Care Fund Operational Guidance

<b>Link:</b>	Link to be added when document published
<b>Audience:</b>	CCGs, Local Authorities
<b>Purpose:</b>	Confirms arrangements for operation of agreed Better Care Fund Plans. Should be read in conjunction with the BCF Planning Requirements for 2017-19

<b>Content:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance on implementing agreed BCF plans</li> <li>• Confirmation of monitoring process and escalation.</li> <li>• Process for refreshing BCF plans and metrics for 2018-19</li> <li>• Support offer for local areas</li> </ul>
<b>Publication date:</b>	TBC
<b>Changes to document:</b>	TBC

### Annex M - Joint Technical Definitions for Performance and Activity

<b>Link:</b>	<a href="https://www.england.nhs.uk/planning-guidance">https://www.england.nhs.uk/planning-guidance</a>
<b>Audience:</b>	CCGs, Direct Commissioners, NHS Foundation Trusts and NHS Trusts
<b>Purpose:</b>	To describe the indicators in Refreshing NHS Plans for 2018/19 to set out for each measure definitions, monitoring, and accountability and planning requirements
<b>Content:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definitions for planning trajectories</li> </ul>
<b>Publication Date:</b>	23 February 2018
<b>Changes to document:</b>	Updates throughout document

### Annex N - NHS Improvement Guidance for Completion of Provider Finance Template

<b>Link:</b>	<a href="https://improvement.nhs.uk/resources/nhs-shared-planning-guidance/">https://improvement.nhs.uk/resources/nhs-shared-planning-guidance/</a>
<b>Audience:</b>	NHS Foundation Trusts and NHS Trusts
<b>Purpose:</b>	To provide guidance for providers for the completion of the financial plan template
<b>Content:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of the structure and revised approach of the new financial planning template</li> <li>• Overview of the content within the template</li> <li>• Approach to checks and validations within the template</li> <li>• Submission details</li> </ul>
<b>Publication Date:</b>	7 February 2018
<b>Changes to document:</b>	Updated for the 2018/19 plan collection – details of changes are described within the technical guidance

### Annex P - NHS Improvement Guidance for Completion of Provider Workforce Template

<b>Link:</b>	<a href="https://improvement.nhs.uk/resources/nhs-shared-planning-guidance/">https://improvement.nhs.uk/resources/nhs-shared-planning-guidance/</a>
<b>Audience:</b>	NHS Foundation Trusts and NHS Trusts
<b>Purpose:</b>	To confirm the requirement for inclusion of workforce planning within provider operating plans
<b>Content:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance on how to produce a workforce plan and complete the necessary documentation</li> </ul>
<b>Publication Date</b>	7 February 2018
<b>Changes to document</b>	Updated for the 2018/19 plan collection – details of changes are described within the technical guidance

### Annex Q - NHS Improvement Guidance for Completion of Provider Activity Template

<b>Link:</b>	<a href="https://improvement.nhs.uk/resources/nhs-shared-planning-guidance/">https://improvement.nhs.uk/resources/nhs-shared-planning-guidance/</a>
<b>Audience:</b>	Acute and ambulance provider NHS Foundation Trusts and NHS Trusts
<b>Purpose:</b>	To provide guidance for acute and ambulance providers for the completion of the activity plan template
<b>Content:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary of changes to the activity template</li> <li>• Guidance on assurance statements</li> <li>• Details of support available</li> <li>• Technical guidance for the activity data collection</li> </ul>
<b>Publication Date:</b>	7 February 2018
<b>Changes to document:</b>	Updated for the 2018/19 plan collection – details of changes are described within the technical guidance

### Annex R - Provider Control Totals and Sustainability and Transformation Fund

<b>Link:</b>	<a href="https://improvement.nhs.uk/resources/nhs-shared-planning-guidance/">https://improvement.nhs.uk/resources/nhs-shared-planning-guidance/</a>
<b>Audience:</b>	CCGs, NHS Trusts and NHS Foundation Trusts
<b>Purpose:</b>	The guidance introduces the Sustainability and Transformation Fund (STF) for the two-year period 2017/18 and 2018/19, outlining the

	methodology for allocations of STF to trusts, the criteria attached to receipt of STF and the methodology for determining providers' financial control totals
<b>Content:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Methodology paper</li> <li>• Criteria for receipt of STF</li> </ul>
<b>Publication Date:</b>	25 September 2017 with further update to be notified
<b>Changes to document:</b>	The STF guidance will be updated to reflect the addition of £650m to the provider STF.