



Technical and supporting guidance

**NHS Operational Planning and Contracting
Guidance 2019/20**

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**Technical Guidance: NHS Operational Planning and Contracting Guidance
2019/20**

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Contents

Contents	3
1	Introduction 4
2	Support, review and assurance for 2019/20 operational plans ... 4
2.1	Overview 4
2.2	System operating plans 4
2.3	Review of system operating plans 5
2.4	Review of organisation operational plans 6
2.5	Role of ICS/STP leaders 7
2.6	Joint data collections..... 7
2.7	Supporting the system 8
2.8	Information Governance 8
3	Key planning advice contacts..... 9
4	Directory of supporting annexes 10
5	Other supporting documents..... 13

1 Introduction

As set out in *NHS Operational Planning and Contracting Guidance 2019/20*, all commissioners (CCGs and direct commissioning including specialised) and all providers are required to submit a full suite of operational plan returns to the deadlines in the national timetable.

This technical planning guidance has been produced 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 2019/20 operational plans

2.1 Overview

NHS England and NHS Improvement will again work together to undertake a joint review process, working with system leaders in a coherent and proportionate way to review system and organisational operating plans.

All system leaders, through ICS/STP governance structures, should sign off on the system operating plan, including the system's financial governance board or equivalent financial decision-making mechanism where they exist. Early engagement with board and governing bodies is critical, allowing adequate time for review and sign-off to meet the overall timetable.

The operational plans of each commissioner and provider will need to be approved by its individual board or governing body before submission. We expect system leaders to work together to ensure that organisational plans within their systems align to system objectives. The most mature ICSs will be able to take a significant role in assurance of organisational plans with agreement of the regional teams.

2.2 System operating plans

As set out in *NHS Operational Planning and Contracting Guidance 2019/20* we expect all ICSs and STPs to produce a system operating plan for 2019/20 which will set the priorities for the forthcoming year and be the foundation for refreshed five-year strategic plans.

The system operating plan consists of the system operating plan overview and the system data aggregation; these two sections must be consistent and aligned. All system partners should be involved in the production of the overview, including Local Government and voluntary sector (VCSE) organisations. Draft system operating plans are due for submission by 19 February 2019 and final versions by 11 April 2019. The plans should be submitted to NHS England and NHS Improvement regional planning mailboxes as detailed in section 3 of this document.

An aggregation tool is available to support systems with consolidating individual organisation plans to create a combined picture of the activity, workforce and finance plan of the system as a whole.

The system operating plan overview must explain how the system will deliver agreed local priorities, acting as year one of the system’s five-year strategic plan. The system operating plan overview should therefore state clearly what the system will deliver for its population with its share of NHS resources for 2019/2020, and the progress that the system expects to make over the year towards its long-term transformation objectives.

Systems may wish to consider the following points in preparing their system overview:

System priorities and deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key priorities and deliverables for the system population in 2019/20 including for local specialised services • Plans to work together to deliver these priorities within the available resources
Activity assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the agreed activity assumptions for the system • Degree of alignment of system activity to organisational plans and challenges to delivery • Considerations for in-year management of demand fluctuations
Capacity planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach to capacity planning at a system-level including winter planning • Alignment of capacity and activity assumptions
Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of workforce requirements, identification of gaps and development of plans to fill them
System financial position and risk management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key risks to delivery of the 2019/20 system control total • Alignment of incentives and removal of financial barriers to integrated care • Arrangements for financial risk management
Efficiencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key system-wide efficiencies and how partners will work together to achieve them • Alignment of system-wide efficiencies for 2019/20 with long-term transformation priorities • The impact of efficiencies on quality of care

2.3 Review of system operating plans

The NHS England/NHS Improvement regional teams will jointly undertake both an assurance and support role with the aim of ensuring high quality plans, which are aligned across providers and commissioners as well as to system priorities.

The regional teams will jointly conduct review meetings with the ICS/STP leaders to review the draft and final system operating plans shortly after submission. The review meetings should be attended by the Regional Director and Regional Director of Finance from NHS England and NHS Improvement, with other staff in support as required.

The review of system operating plans will seek to ensure that:

- There is alignment between the system overview and system data aggregation and the organisational plans (this includes alignment of activity, efficiency and capacity assumptions);
- System priorities and plans for care redesign align with the commitments in the Long Term Plan;
- The system has produced a clear and robust plan for winter 2019/20;
- Priorities, milestones and deliverables are clear;
- The overview is a product of partnership working across the ICS/STP and there is a strong level of commitment to the plan from each organisation in the system; and
- There is appropriate governance within the ICS/STP to drive delivery of the plan.

2.4 Review of organisation operational plans

NHS England/NHS Improvement regional teams will assure the organisational operational plans, working through and with the STP/ICS leaders as appropriate.

As stated above, the most mature ICSs will be able to take a significant role in assurance of organisational plans with agreement of the regional teams.

The review of organisational plans will seek to ensure that:

- Plans are the product of partnership working across ICSs/STPs, with clear triangulation between commissioner and provider plans and related contracts to ensure alignment in activity, workforce and income and expenditure assumptions;
- Plans are stretching and realistic, and show a bottom line position consistent with the control totals set by NHS England and NHS Improvement;
- Milestones and deliverables are clear;
- Plans are directly derived from the activity projections agreed by ICS/STP leaders and reflect historic growth levels moderated by agreed transformation and efficiency schemes. The plans should enable agreed performance trajectories to be delivered within available financial resources;
- Plans include appropriate phasing 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;
- Plans include an integrated demand and capacity plan for elective and non-elective. This is underpinned by a bed plan, and a staffing plan. A winter plan is a subset of that plan for certain months of the year;
- Plans ensure that quality of care and patient safety are maintained; and
- 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.

2.5 Role of ICS/STP leaders

The role of ICS/STP leaders in the planning process will include:

- Convening the collective leadership of systems to agree activity, efficiency and capacity assumptions;
- Supporting the development of organisational plans, ensuring alignment of activity and efficiency assumptions;
- Validating the mental health investment plans for each CCG in the system, and providing assurance that the investment plans are sufficient to deliver the requirements set down in the planning guidance;
- Ensuring contract alignment across the system and alignment of mental health income/expenditure;
- Identifying and preventing any potential contract disputes and managing any disputes which do occur;
- For the most mature systems, involvement in the assurance of organisational plans in partnership with NHS England and NHS Improvement regional teams;
- Development of the system overview; and
- Agreement and sign-off of the system operating plan (system overview and system data aggregation), ensuring alignment with organisational plans.

2.6 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 2019/20 planning round, commissioners and providers will provide aligned planning information to NHS England and NHS Improvement respectively. Given the planning timetable and the scale of the required system changes, a number of separate commissioner and provider collections remain in place.

Planning information from collections should be shared locally between commissioners and providers, allowing transparency and understanding of common data and enabling alignment of plans.

Building on the 2018/19 contract and plan alignment approach, we will be asking STP leaders to return a 2019/20 contract and plan alignment template to demonstrate that 2019/20 plans and contracts are aligned between commissioners and providers. This template will also demonstrate that an aligned position for 2018/19 forecast outturn underpins the agreement of these contracts.

Support is available from regional NHS England and NHS Improvement teams to help organisations make progress and resolve outstanding issues. The expectation of NHS England and NHS Improvement is that there should be no disputes between commissioners and providers about the agreement of contractual arrangements for 2019/20 that are unresolvable locally.

2.7 Supporting the system

NHS England and NHS Improvement are committed to providing support to organisations and local systems to help them deliver robust, high quality plans. This support offer will be further developed based on the feedback we receive.

For the 2019/20 planning round this support includes:

- A range of guidance and technical documents as outlined in Section 4 'Directory of supporting annexes' and Section 5 'Other supporting documents' below.
- A series of cascade sessions covering a range of key messages relating to the financial architecture and guidance, as well as an outline of key changes to the technical products that have been published to support the planning round. These cascade sessions will be made available to all organisations and local systems and delivered in early January 2019 by each joint region individually.
- A number of WebExes to provide information on specific new requirements.
- FAQ documents published on the NHSE England and NHS Improvement websites.

Regional colleagues should be contacted in the first instance if you have a query. NHS England central team and NHS Improvement national teams are available to provide support in respect of specific technical elements of the operating plans. The contact details for these resources can be found in section 3 'Key planning advice contacts' below.

2.8 Information Governance

The purpose of requesting collection of planning data is to oversee and support commissioners and providers in the planning round for 2019/20, to develop safe and sustainable plans, support financial, activity, workforce and quality planning, assess and to assure plans and provide feedback. This will be done in accordance with NHS England and NHS Improvement (comprising NHS Trust Development Authority and Monitor) statutory functions and duties.

Where NHS England and NHS Improvement intend to work more closely in the future, we will share this data with each other (and with Health Education England in the case of provider workforce plans) for the purposes set out above.

Detailed information governance guidance on data sharing will be included in relevant technical guidance annexes and collection templates as well as in other communications with commissioners and providers. It is essential that this information governance guidance is read as part of the completion and submission process and that commissioners and providers are aware of the use and sharing of planning data by NHS England and NHS Improvement.

3 Key planning advice contacts

The main contact point for providers and commissioners is the regional teams; the contact details are set out in the table below.

Location	NHS England	NHS Improvement
North	england.planning-north@nhs.net	NHSI.planningnorth@nhs.net
Midlands & East	england.me-ops@nhs.net	NHSI.planningmande@nhs.net
London	england.londonsubmissions@nhs.net	NHSI.planninglondon@nhs.net
South West and South East	england.planning-south@nhs.net	NHSI.planningsouth@nhs.net

Further technical support can be accessed as follows:

Subject area	Email address
NHSE central planning team	england.ops-planning@nhs.net
NHS Improvement	
Finance	NHSI.finplan@nhs.net
Capital and Cash	NHSI.capitalcashqueries@nhs.net
Performance and Activity	NHSI.returns@nhs.net
Workforce	NHSI.workforce@nhs.net
Quality	NHSI.clinicalquality@nhs.net
Strategic Planning	NHSI.strategicfinance@nhs.net

4 Directory of supporting annexes

Annex	Title	Content	Issue date
A	2019/20 planning prices: an explanatory note	Detail of proposed National Tariff Prices for 2019/20.	21 December 2018
B	Guidance for operational and activity plans: assurance statements	Sets out assurance statement deliverables for 2019/20, for which Regions are asked to provide assurance that delivery plans are being put in place.	14 January 2019
C	Guidance to trusts for operational plans	Clarifies 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. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectives for 2019/20 operational plans; • Requirements of provider operational plans; • Summary of operational plan submissions; • Guidance on operational plan narrative; and • Approach to review of provider operational plans. 	14 January 2019
D	NHS England guidance for financial business rules	Details of business rules and financial planning requirements and description of allocations and control total setting and CSF funding allocation, conditions of receipt, monitoring and quarterly review and payment process.	21 December 2018
E	Integration of specialised services with local health and care systems	Sets out further detail on how specialised services will be planned in collaboration with local systems to ensure more joined-up care for patients. Includes information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The case for change; • Integrating specialised services; 	21 December 2018

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Annex	Title	Content	Issue date
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialised services planning boards; • Developing more advanced place-based arrangements for specialised commissioning, including options for more advanced arrangements; • Pooled budgets; • Joint appointments and internal delegation; • Contracting under advanced place-based arrangements; • System control totals; • Approval processes; and • Ongoing assurance and oversight. 	
F	Joint technical definitions for performance and activity - operational plans	Definitions relating to performance measures and activity collections not covered by the national contract.	21 December 2018
G	The Provider Sustainability Fund (PSF) and financial control totals	Outlines the methodology for allocations of PSF, FRF and MRET funding to providers, the criteria attached to receipt of PSF, FRF and MRET funding and the methodology for determining providers' financial control totals.	January 2019
H	Information on CQUIN	<p>Guidance for the 2019/20 CQUIN scheme as it applies to both CCG-commissioned services and NHS England-commissioned specialised services. Contains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmation of the value of the scheme; • A description of the indicators which will form part of the scheme, and how these apply to providers of both CCG- 	January 2019

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Annex	Title	Content	Issue date
		<p>commissioned and NHS England-commissioned services; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links and detailed information about where further support and information can be found about the interventions which will be supported through CQUIN. 	
I	Information on Quality Premium	<p>Overview of the 2019/20 Scheme, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmation of the available funding; • Detail on the gateway measures; and • Description of the available incentive indicators related to improvements in clinical quality and demand management. 	January 2019
J	Joint contract dispute resolution	<p>Documents providing information on the contract dispute resolution process for commissioners and providers that fail to agree contracts by the required deadline.</p>	January 2019
K	Better Care Fund requirements	<p>Provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmation of planning requirements for BCF plans; • More detailed guidance on the National Conditions for the Better Care Fund, set by government through the policy framework (expected to be published January 2019); • Assurance process and timescales for BCF plans; • Detailed definitions and guidance for setting expectations for the four national metrics for the BCF; and • Support offer for local areas. 	Early 2019

5 Other supporting documents

The following supporting documents that have been published elsewhere will also be valuable during the 2019/20 planning round.

Title	Link
<p>NHS England commissioner guidance for operational and activity plans: SDCS submissions</p> <p>(Published 21 December 2018)</p>	<p>via https://datacollection.sdcs.digital.nhs.uk</p>
<p>NHS standard contract 2019/20</p> <p>(Published for consultation on 21 December 2018)</p> <p>Supplementary definitions for operational standards and national quality requirements set out in the NHS standard contract 2019/20</p> <p>(Will be published alongside final version of the NHS standard contract 2019/20)</p>	<p>www.england.nhs.uk/nhs-standard-contract/19-20/</p>
<p>NHS Improvement guidance for completion of provider finance template</p> <p>(To be published January 2019)</p>	<p>www.improvement.nhs.uk/resources/nhs-shared-planning-guidance/</p>
<p>NHS Improvement guidance for completion of provider activity template</p> <p>(To be published January 2019)</p>	<p>www.improvement.nhs.uk/resources/nhs-shared-planning-guidance/</p>
<p>NHS Improvement guidance for completion of provider workforce template</p> <p>(To be published January 2019)</p>	<p>www.improvement.nhs.uk/resources/nhs-shared-planning-guidance/</p>