

To: Sir Paul Ennals CBE (Chair)
Dr Birju Bartoli (Chief Executive)
Northumbria Healthcare NHS
Foundation Trust

NHS England
Wellington House
133-155 Waterloo Road
London
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cc. Professor Sir Liam Donaldson
(Chair)
David Chandler (CFO)
North East and North Cumbria
Integrated Care Board (ICB)
Samantha Allen, ICB Accountable
Officer and NHS England North
East and Yorkshire Regional
Director (interim)

16 July 2026

Dear Paul and Birju,

Integrated health organisation designation

We are pleased to inform you that NHS England has reviewed your application to be eligible to hold an integrated health organisation (IHO) contract and recognises your ongoing developmental work to meet the criteria set out in [Annex 2 of the consultation on the Advanced Foundation Trust Programme – guide for applicants](#).

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust will now be designated as eligible to take on an IHO contract. This is a significant achievement and recognises the significant progress that has been made, in partnership with your ICB and system partners, to develop the strategy, orientation and infrastructure that will be required to take on responsibility for planning, resource allocation and delivery across the care pathway.

The defining characteristic of an IHO contract holder will be taking on responsibility for improving outcomes across a defined population. This represents a shift to a population focus, requiring trusts to take on leadership for population health improvement, lead beyond organisational boundaries and manage additional financial and clinical risk.

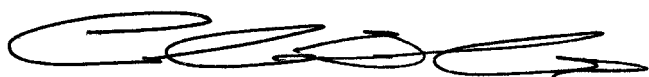
We recognise that, as a first wave IHO candidate, your work to develop a local model has sat alongside work to co-develop an IHO policy framework nationally. We have taken a developmental approach to designation in this first wave and will continue to work with you to develop a roadmap towards mature IHO arrangements ahead of an IHO contract going live in 2027.

We will carry out a risk-based approach to contract assurance prior to the start of any IHO contract. Given the developmental approach to this first designation wave, some capabilities may be tested in greater detail as part of this assurance process.

We look forward to continuing to work with you and NHS North East and North Cumbria ICB as the IHO model evolves and as you make preparations to take on additional responsibilities and work towards implementation of the full IHO model.

Thank you for your continued hard work and ongoing commitment as a first wave IHO candidate.

Yours sincerely,



Glen Burley
Deputy Chief Executive (Interim)



Tarryn Lake
Regional Director of Finance, North
East and Yorkshire