

## NHS England and NHS Improvement Board meetings held in common

**Paper Title:** 2021/22 NHS Planning Guidance

**Agenda item:** 6 (Public session)

**Report by:** Julian Kelly, Chief Financial Officer

**Paper type:** For approval

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### Organisation Objective:

NHS Mandate from Government                       Statutory item   
NHS Long Term Plan                       Governance   
NHS People Plan

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### Executive summary:

The Government have now allocated £8.1 billion (£1.5bn announced in November and £6.6bn in March) to cover NHS Covid costs for the first half of 2021/22. This allows us now to issue planning guidance to the NHS. Our approach recognises the significant uncertainties with which we are entering the year, in terms of Covid impact and the extent of non-Covid demand. It provides national parameters and funding envelopes within which local systems can deliver activity and work towards LTP goals. It prioritises the sustainable recovery of elective services, cancer and mental health care as well as primary and community services in a way that addresses health inequalities, enables local clinical decision-making and locks in transformations to the way we deliver services. We are asking for financial and activity plans to be completed and agreed at Integrated Care System level to cement the collaboration that needs to underpin all the priorities set out in this guidance.

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### Action required:

The Boards are asked to approve the planning guidance attached at annex A.

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### Background

1. We are entering 2021/22 with significant uncertainty, including the future pattern of Covid, the extent of backlogs in services disrupted by the pandemic and the rate that demand will increase over the year ahead.
2. NHS staff have played a key part in the national response and will need support to recuperate. We also need to be ambitious for patients, both in terms of the level of



activity that we can offer over the coming year, and the pathway and service transformations that will help deliver it.

3. Our planning approach for 21/22 reflects these challenges and sets out operational priorities that support the NHS to recover and transform non-Covid services, consistent with the Long Term Plan, while recognising the new context and continuing demands of Covid.

### **NHS England and NHS Improvement**

## **Considerations**

### *Planning approach*

4. We have taken account of feedback, building on the 21/22 priorities we set out before Christmas. The strategic narrative and priorities outlined in the guidance will apply across the full year. We are not at this stage, however, asking for full year plans in areas where there are outstanding H2 funding questions.
5. We are asking for plans to be returned at system level, following agreement across partners within the system.

### *Planning priorities*

6. The planning guidance sets out our priorities in the following areas:
  - a. Supporting the health and wellbeing of staff, and taking action on recruitment and retention
  - b. Delivering the NHS Covid vaccination programme and continuing to meet the needs of patients with Covid-19
  - c. Building on what we have learned during the pandemic to transform the delivery of services, accelerate the restoration of elective and cancer care and manage the increasing demand on mental health services
  - d. Expanding primary care capacity to improve access and local health outcomes and address health inequalities
  - e. Transforming community and urgent and emergency care to prevent inappropriate admissions to hospital, improve flow and reduce length of stay
  - f. Working collaboratively across systems to deliver on these priorities.
7. The planning guidance is attached at annex A.
8. The guidance will be accompanied by:
  - a. Policy guidance to support delivery of:
    - i. ICS functions and development
    - ii. Elective recovery
    - iii. Health inequalities
    - iv. Maternity priorities including Ockenden

- v. Financial framework
- b. Technical guidance to support development of:
  - i. Activity, workforce and finance plans
  - ii. Narrative plans setting out key assumptions and actions

#### *Planning for September 2021 to March 2022*

9. As we approach the second half of the year, we will review the planning environment in light of the changing circumstances – including the level of available funding and the position in relation to Covid transmission and prevalence. We will then consider how we approach the planning ask for H2 and whether we undertake any review of those areas in which we have asked for full-year plans.

#### **Next steps**

10. Our next steps, following agreement from the NHSE/I Boards, are to:
- a. Issue this guidance, together with the accompanying technical information, to Integrated Care Systems
  - b. Work with systems through our regional teams to support the development of plans which will then be agreed at regional level