



REPORT CLASSIFICATION	✓	CATEGORY OF PAPER	✓
Official		Proposes specific action	
Official: Sensitive Commercial		Provides assurance	
Official: Sensitive Personal		For information only	

BOARD	
28 March 2023	
Report Title:	North East and North Cumbria Operational Plan 2023/24 Submission
Purpose of report	
<p>NHS England requires each ICB and partner NHS Foundation Trusts to submit a joint plan showing how the system will deliver the national operational requirements for the NHS for 2023/24. This report outlines the key national requirements and summarises the North East and North Cumbria submission in relation to activity, performance and workforce.</p>	
Key points	
<p>In December 2022 NHS England published the National Planning Guidance for 2023/24. This includes requirements for NHS activity and performance metrics, for example the achievement of urgent and emergency care performance metrics.</p> <p>The Operational Plan submission includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity and performance templates • Workforce templates • Finance template (subject to a separate ICB Board paper) • Recovery Narrative, focused on delivering system efficiencies, elective and cancer care, and urgent and emergency care • Specific templates on the use of the additional capacity fund and ambulance service capacity <p>During January – March the ICB coordinated the development of the Operational Plan system partners, including each NHS Foundation Trust, and with support from the NHS England locality team and Health Education England. This has included a weekly system</p>	

planning meeting, to share updated information on the process, the national requirements, and the developing local plan.

Each NHS Foundation Trust is required to provide a series of templates showing their internal level of activity, performance, workforce and financial plans. Those Trust level plans, and other templates, for example on the mental health workforce employed by non-NHS organisations delivering NHS commissioned services, have then been collated into a system wide position.

On 23 February a first draft submission was provided to NHS England in line with the national timetable. Feedback from NHS England has been used to inform the final submission.

The national timescale for the final Operational Plan submission is 30 March 2023.

The ICB Board are required to approve the Operational Plan submission, noting the process to develop the plan, the key commitments in the plan, and the risks and issues associated with the implementation of the plan.

Risks and issues

The ICB Board should note that the Operational Plan contains a large amount of detailed information. In agreeing to approve the submission of the Plan the Board are not expected to review all of the detail. The Board are asked to consider the robustness of the process leading to the submission, and the overarching headline information at a strategic level.

The Operational Plan includes some areas of planned activity, performance, workforce or finance that do not meet the national requirements. There is a risk that NHS England will require further submission iterations or assurance to demonstrate how the North East and North Cumbria system will move towards compliance with the national requirements.

There are clear risks in achieving the implementation of the Operational Plan, including:

Risk	Mitigation
Risk of system financial deficit	Shared financial planning across the ICB, NHS FTs and partners based on national financial framework.
Risk of underperformance against elective, diagnostic and cancer operational requirements	Collective review of opportunities to maximise capacity through system forums
Risk of underperformance against UEC standards	Collective review of opportunities to maximise capacity and flow
Risk of insufficient workforce capacity to deliver operational requirements	Collective review of workforce capacity, recruitment, retention and skill mix
Risk unwarranted variation	Constructive challenge of provider organisations activity and performance assumptions and consistent standards

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Risk of entrenching inequalities	Constructive challenge about resource deployment between organisations and places, to enable equitable recovery. Internal focus within organisations and places on addressing inequalities.
Risk of unacceptable quality across experience, safety and outcomes	Constructive challenge about the impact on quality from the draft plan, and how identified quality challenges will be purposefully addressed.

Assurances

The Operational Plan has been developed in accordance with the National Planning Guidance and timetable published by NHS England.

Updates on the development of the Operational Plan have been provided on a monthly basis to both the ICB Executive Committee and Finance, Investment and performance Committee.

The ICB, with excellent support from the NHS England Locality Team and Health Education England, have coordinated a clear process with partner NHS Foundation Trusts and local partners.

The proposed final submission has been informed by feedback from NHS England on the draft submission on 23 February, and on feedback to further interim 'flash reports'.

The ICB has worked with all partners to seek to triangulate the interdependencies between activity, performance, workforce and financial submissions through constructive check and challenge

Recommendation/action required

- a) Approve the submission of the Operational Plan to NHS England as outlined in this report.
- b) Agree a delegation to the ICB Chief of Strategy and Operations and Executive Director of Finance to authorise the final submission in the context of potential changes between the ICB Board paper and final national submission date of 30 March if required.

Sponsor/approving executive director	Executive Chief of Strategy and Operations					
Report author	Director of Strategy and Planning					
Link to ICB corporate aims (please tick all that apply)						
CA1: Improve outcomes in population health and healthcare						X
CA2: tackle inequalities in outcomes, experience and access						X
CA3: Enhance productivity and value for money						X
CA4: Help the NHS support broader social and economic development						
Relevant legal/statutory issues						
Note any relevant Acts, regulations, national guidelines etc						
Any potential/actual conflicts of interest associated with the paper? (please tick)	Yes		No	X	N/A	
If yes, please specify						
Equality analysis completed (please tick)	Yes		No	X	N/A	
If there is an expected impact on patient outcomes and/or experience, has a quality impact assessment been undertaken? (please tick)	Yes		No	X	N/A	
Key implications						
Are additional resources required?	The Operational Plan submission includes the system financial plan, with triangulation between the different elements of the submission.					
Has there been/does there need to be appropriate clinical involvement?	NHS Foundation Trusts have developed the trust level plans with appropriate clinical involvement.					
Has there been/does there need to be any patient and public involvement?	There has been no specific patient and public involvement in the development of the Operational Plan.					
Has there been/does there need to be partner and/or other stakeholder engagement?	There has been wide stakeholder engagement with NHS Foundation Trusts in developing the submission.					

North East and North Cumbria Operational Plan 2023/24

1. Introduction

Every year NHS England publishes national planning guidance setting out the key performance ambitions/requirements for the forthcoming financial year. Each year NHS organisations are required to submit a plan in response to the national guidance.

For 2023/24 NHS England requires each ICB and partner NHS Foundation Trusts to submit a joint Operational Plan showing how the system will deliver the national operational requirements for the NHS for 2023/24.

This report outlines the key national requirements and summarises the North East and North Cumbria submission in relation to activity, performance and workforce.

During the planning process NHS Foundation Trusts have provided regular interim reports on their internal planning. The information in this report is based on the final interim report received on 21 March. It is anticipated that there will be further iterations prior to the final submission to NHS England on 30 March and any material changes will be verbally highlighted at the ICB Board meeting.

2. Background

2.1 Timetable

The key milestones in developing the Operational Plan submission are:

- 23 December 2022: NHS England published the annual planning guidance
- w/c 9 January 2023: NHS England published the majority of the templates for local completion
- 9 February 2023: ICS Submission deadline for first draft Trust activity, performance and workforce templates
- 14 February: ICS submission deadline for draft Provider finance plans
- 23 February: National draft submission for all templates (activity and performance, workforce, additional capacity investment proposal, ambulance capacity proposal and finance), and the system Recovery Narrative

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- 22 March: ICS Submission Deadline for all Trust and ICB templates including finance
- 30 March: National Submission deadline for all templates and Recovery Narrative (final submission).

2.2 Submission Content

The Operational Plan submission includes:

- Activity and performance template
- Workforce templates – Trust level, Primary Care and Mental Health services
- Finance template
- Recovery Narrative, focused on delivering system efficiencies, elective and cancer care, and urgent and emergency care
- Focused templates on the use of the additional capacity fund (the Operational Plan includes an assumption that £13 million will be released to the local system from NHS England) and ambulance service capacity the Operational Plan includes an assumption that a minimum of £8.6million will be released to North East Ambulance Service).

Each NHS Foundation Trust is required to provide a series of templates showing their internal level of activity, performance, workforce and financial plan. Those Trust level plans, and other templates, for example on the mental health workforce employed by non-NHS organisations delivering NHS commissioned services, have then been collated into a system wide position.

3. Activity and Performance

The key National requirements and NENC planned position for each service are summarised below. Metrics shown in **green** meet the national requirement, those shown in **red** do not meet the national requirement, those in black are where no specific metric is applicable in 2023/24.

3.1 Urgent and Emergency Care

National Ambition	NENC Plan
Improve A&E waiting times so that no less than 76% of patients are seen within 4 hours by March 2024 with further improvement in 2024/25	81.9% , based on the anticipated level of additional capacity funding from NHS E.
Improve category 2 ambulance response times to an average of 30 minutes across 2023/24, with	30 minute average response time.

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further improvement towards pre-pandemic levels in 2024/25	
Reduce general and acute bed occupancy to 92% or below	91.1%

3.2 Elective Care and Diagnostics

National Ambition	NENC Plan
Eliminate waits of over 65 weeks for elective care by March 2024 (except where patients choose to wait longer or in specific specialties)	NUTH final submission is for 14 patients to exceed a 65 week wait at the end of March 2023, all of which are adult, complex spine cases.
Deliver the system- specific activity target (agreed through the operational planning process) – 109% weighted value activity	107% - 109% 2 Trusts with lowest plans: NCIC and STSFT are increasing their plans – it will take a few days to know whether this achieves the system ask of 108.9%
Deliver an appropriate reduction in outpatient follow-up (OPFU) in line with the national ambition to reduce OPFU activity by 25% against the 2019/20 baseline by March 2024	89%, only one Trust is currently showing 75% or lower.
Increase the percentage of patients that receive a diagnostic test within six weeks in line with the March 2025 ambition of 95%	No specific target for 2023/24, all Trusts planning an improved position
Deliver diagnostic activity levels that support plans to address elective and cancer backlogs and the diagnostic waiting time ambition	No specific metric, all Trusts indicating increased diagnostic capacity.

3.3 Cancer

National Ambition	NENC Plan
Continue to reduce the number of patients waiting over 62 days – 861 people by Mar 2024	856 people
Meet the cancer faster diagnosis standard by March 2024 so that 75% of patients who have been urgently referred by their GP for suspected cancer are diagnosed or have cancer ruled out within 28 days	77.5%, all Trusts are planning to reach the 75% ambition by March 2024.

3.4 Mental Health

National Ambition	NENC Plan
Increase the number of adults and older adults accessing IAPT treatment	The draft submission on 23 February showed a plan to achieve each of these trajectories. A further analysis of Place based information currently shows underachievement of all 3 requirements. This is under review.
Improve access to mental health support for children and young people in line with the national ambition for individuals aged 0-18 accessing NHS funded services (compared to 2019)	
Achieve a 5% year on year increase in the number of adults and older adults supported by community mental health services	
Work towards eliminating inappropriate adult acute out of area placements	Currently both Mental Health Trusts are forecasting a small but reducing number of out of area placements until the end of March 2023
Recover the dementia diagnosis rate to 66.7%	67% (Q4 2023/24)

3.5 People with a Learning Disability and/or Autistic People

National Ambition	NENC Plan
Ensure 75% of people aged over 14 on GP learning disability registers receive an annual health check and health action plan by March 2024.	77% (March 2024)
Reduce reliance on inpatient care, while improving the quality of inpatient care, so that by March 2024 no more than 30 adults with a learning disability and/or who are autistic per million adults and no more than 12–15 under 18s with a learning disability and/or who are autistic per million under 18s are cared for in an inpatient unit	47.6 per million adults (March 2024) 13.6 per million children and young people under 18 (March 2024)

3.6 Primary Care

National Ambition	NENC Plan
Continue on the trajectory to deliver 50 million more appointments in general practice by the end of March 2024	Increase in GP appointments from 1.4m in April 2023 to 1.6m in March 2024.
Recover dental activity, improving units of dental activity (UDAs) towards pre-pandemic levels	No target for 2023/24.

4. Workforce

Each partner NHS Foundation Trust is required to complete a detailed workforce return including planned changes in the total workforce, workforce in post, use of agency staff and sickness levels. A separate return has been completed by NHS England and ICB staff showing the same headings for Primary Care, and for the workforce employed by non NHS organisations delivering NHS commissioned mental health services.

In summary, those returns show:

- All partner organisations are planning a reduction in sickness absence
- Foundation Trusts are planning a 1.5% increase in the total workforce and an increase of 160 whole time equivalent bank and agency staff

5. Recovery Narrative

NHS England provided a template to all systems to complete a recovery narrative. The narrative focusses on the overarching approach to improving efficiency, and then specific sections on each of urgent and emergency care, elective care and diagnostics, and cancer. The Recovery Narrative provides further information on some of the key actions to be taken to meet the ambitions in the Operational Plan submission and is attached as Appendix A.

6. Triangulation

During the planning process each partner NHS Foundation Trust has been requested to fully triangulate their internal planning assumptions between activity, performance, workforce and finance. The ICB, with support from the NHS England locality team and Health Education England has provided constructive check and challenge to Trusts where potential discrepancies were identified.

7. Recommendations

The Board/Committee is asked to:

- c) Approve the submission of the Operational Plan to NHS England as outlined in this report.
- d) Agree a delegation to the ICB Chief of Strategy and Operations and Executive Director of Finance to authorise the final submission in the context of potential changes between the ICB Board paper and final national submission date of 30 March if required.

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Date: 21 March 2023