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Shona Dunn

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Dame Meg Hillier MP
Chair of Public Accounts Committee
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

1st June 2022

Dear Dame Meg Hillier MP

House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts Ninety-First Report of Session 2017-19 NHS financial sustainability: progress review

The above Treasury Minute contains recommendations relating to the establishment of statutory provisions for Integrated Care Systems in the NHS in England from April 2022. I am writing to advise the Public Accounts Committee of an updated timetable for establishing these organisations, which takes into account the timing of the Health and Care Bill receiving Royal Assent on 28th April 2022.

6: PAC recommendation: The Department, with NHS England and NHS Improvement, should write to us by July 2019 defining the governance arrangements for effective integrated care systems; detail how they will align individual NHS bodies' responsibilities to improve system management including assumptions regarding suggested legislative changes, and how they will support those areas where partnership working is less well developed.

The Health and Care Act 2022 supports the move towards integration by providing measures to put Integrated Care Systems – which have evolved over the last few years – on a statutory footing through the establishment of Integrated Care Boards and Integrated Care Partnerships. The Act creates new governance arrangements for health commissioning, with Integrated Care Boards taking over the commissioning functions of CCGs. These governance arrangements will be fleshed out as part of the commencement process, and the new system will start in July 2022.

The intention to introduce ICSs by July 2022, subject to the passage of the Bill, was communicated to the NHS in the "2022-23 Planning and Operational Priorities Guidance" published on 24th December 2021. The Department of Health and Social Care laid a written Ministerial statement to Parliament on 5th January.

The guidance and the written statement referenced the significant work that had been undertaken to prepare for the launch of statutory arrangements for integrated care systems but also acknowledged that this new deadline allowed time for the Bill to complete its remaining stages through Parliament. At that point the Bill was about to undergo Committee stages in the House of Lords and the Government statement made clear it considered it essential that Parliament be given sufficient time to consider the Bill.

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This guidance also made clear that Designate Integrated Care Board leaders should continue to develop system-level plans for 2022/23 and prepare for the formal establishment of integrated care boards to the new timeline of 1 July.

As mentioned above, the Health and Care Bill has now become an Act and our intention remains to implement this provision from 1 July.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shona Dunn', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Shona Dunn

Second Permanent Secretary