



# Department of Health & Social Care

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

28 October 2022

Dear Chair,

## **Re: Public Accounts Committee, Twenty-Second Report of Session 2019–20, Digital transformation in the NHS**

The Public Accounts Committee made a number of recommendations in its report [Digital Transformation in the NHS](#) (published 2 November 2020). One of the Committee's recommendations was that in order to improve clarity and transparency, the Department should 'write to the Committee by spring 2021 clearly setting out the responsibilities for digital transformation of each national organisation and communicate this to local organisations.'

This action was necessarily delayed to take account of the review that the then Secretary of State for Health and Social Care commissioned from Laura Wade-Gery into the national leadership of digital transformation. This [review](#) was published last year. It emphasised the importance of achieving digital transformation to deliver health and care suitable for the 21st century, and also how the use of technology during the pandemic has accelerated progress.

## **Bringing together NHS Digital, NHSX and NHS England & Improvement**

Following the publication of the review, and confirmation that the Secretary of State accepted its findings (as set out in his written statement of 23 November 2021), the NHSX identity was retired at the end of January 2022, and its responsibilities for national digital policy moved into the Transformation Directorate of NHS England and Improvement, including into a Joint Unit that reports to me in DHSC and Dr Tim Ferris, National Director of Transformation in NHS England. This Joint Unit exercises functions on behalf of both DHSC and NHS England and Improvement and ensures alignment between strategy, policy and delivery.

The Secretary of State also announced the intention that the functions of NHS Digital will also move into NHS England and Improvement, and the NHS Digital identity will be retired. The Department of Health and Social care announced on 21st October 2022 that this transfer of functions, which were due to happen at the end of March 2023, would now happen in January 2023, subject to parliamentary approval and consultation with the Devolved Administrations.

Taken together, these reforms bring together and centralise all of the bodies with national responsibilities for digital transformation (NHSX), National IT and data services (NHS Digital), and delivery (NHSE) within a single organisation, thereby creating a clear, central governance structure that the system can understand.

These responsibilities will all sit under a single leader, Dr Tim Ferris, the National Director of Transformation in NHS England. The current CEO of NHS Digital, Simon Bolton, who is now also the CIO of NHS England, reports to Dr Ferris.

This process of transition will be completed in January 2023.

You also asked that the responsibilities set out above were communicated and made clear throughout the system.

The changes to national responsibilities were originally published on GOV.UK on 22 November 2021, and in a written statement to Parliament on 23 November 2021. An acceleration to the timetable for bringing together these organisations was published on 21st October.

As well as these official channels, these changes have been communicated through an extensive range of system facing channels, including national bulletins, briefings, regional briefing sessions and events as well as through engagement with stakeholder bodies.

Yours sincerely,



**Shona Dunn**  
**Second Permanent Secretary**

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