

NHS Mandate 2021/22

The Government has published its Mandate to NHS England and NHS Improvement. The Mandate is an annual document and was a product of the 2012 Health and Social Care Act. That piece of legislation (the so-called Lansley reforms, after the then Secretary of State) set the NHS at arms' length from the Department of Health, such that, supposedly, the Secretary of State was no longer involved in the day-to-day running of the service, and Richmond House was no longer its headquarters. In exchange for the Department handing over the vast majority of its budget to NHS England, the Mandate, underpinned by an Outcomes Framework, lays out what the NHS has to deliver in return. The 2021/22 Mandate may well be the last of its type, as proposals in the White Paper, [*Integration and Innovation: working together to improve health and social care for all*](#), ahead of an upcoming Health and Care Bill, suggest that rather than requiring there to be an annual Mandate, there just needs to be one in place at all times.

This Mandate sets NHSE/I five objectives.

1. Continue to lead the NHS response to COVID-19

The Government is clear that this is the main priority for 2021-22 and concedes that the scale of the response required to meet this objective will impact on the ability of the NHS to deliver on other objectives. There are three deliverables against which progress will be assessed. Firstly, to ensure that all Covid patients and those with "long Covid" continue to be treated in accordance with emerging best practice and with a focus on enhanced infection prevention. Secondly, to ensure that Covid vaccinations are rolled out at maximum pace consistent with the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation's recommendations on priorities. Finally, to ensure that commissioners and providers are meeting the Accessible Information Standard (which relates to the communication needs of people with a disability, impairment, or sensory loss) in their communications with patients and the public.

2. Continue to implement the NHS Long Term Plan (LTP), focusing on transformation of services, to support NHS resilience, and continue to inspire public confidence

The pandemic has impacted on progress towards implementing many elements of the LTP and will continue to do so during 2021-22. After a focus on minimising the future impact of the pandemic, the NHS must then work on recovering delivery against LTP commitments, including on work to support the further expansion of NHS programmes and services, and on embedding the positive changes brought about by the pandemic. As part of this, the NHS will focus particularly on minimising the further decline in performance where Covid-19 has led to backlogs and to start the process of recovery as quickly as possible, for example in elective surgery waiting times. 13 priority commitments, combining LTP targets and 2019 manifesto commitments are set out in an Annex.

3. With support from Government, deliver the manifesto priorities that will enhance delivery of the LTP

Alongside some rather more predictable commitments on staff numbers and new hospitals, the Government will also be bringing forward a long-term solution for adult social care. Key to this will be improvements to address the persistent and significant issue of delayed discharge. Clinical Commissioning Groups will need to work effectively with local authorities in 2021/22 to deliver the jointly managed Better Care Fund to which the NHS will contribute





at least £4.26bn. Responding to the Government's wider manifesto commitments in relation to EU Exit, NHSE/I will also continue to support Government and work with wider partners to effectively manage any impact on the NHS and patients from the end of the transition period, and to make the most of future opportunities arising from new trading arrangements as they emerge.

4. Improving prevention of ill health and delivery of NHS public health services

Alongside the commitments made as part of the LTP, which had prevention largely at its heart, there are a series of additional objectives relating to non-pandemic immunisation and screening programmes and additional support to aid weight loss and overcome addiction.

5. Maintain and improve information sharing

The Mandate requires continued improvement in the use of data and data sharing to deliver better services. The NHS is required to make as much data publicly available as possible, and take a proportionate approach to data protection and information governance so that there are no unnecessary barriers to sharing data and information that will improve the service to patients, including demographic data to support work to address inequalities. The NHS is also required to be transparent about progress on Mandate requirements and report at regular agreed intervals on the deliverables. On wider Long Term Plan commitments, reporting will be through existing mechanisms for sharing information with Government, including through sharing of Board Papers, and reporting by exception on notable departures from expected delivery timetables.

Funding

The mandate also sets out NHS England's revenue and capital resource limits for 2021/22, along with limits for previous and future years covered by the NHS funding settlement.

The Government had previously set five financial tests against which the implementation of the NHS Long Term Plan would be assessed, and stresses again its commitment to those tests. Two of them (on financial balance and productivity growth) are reflected in the Mandate metrics and headline metrics for the third, fourth and fifth tests will be agreed by July 2021. Progress against all five tests will be tracked, with trajectories taking account of the impact of the pandemic.

The mandate can be found [here](#).