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Gateway Reference: 02796

To: CEOs and Directors of Nursing of Trusts and
Foundation Trusts
CCG Clinical Leaders

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CC: NHS TDA CEO and Director of Nursing
Monitor CEO
Care Quality Commission Chief Inspector of Hospitals
Regional Directors and Regional Chief Nurses
Directors of Commissioning Operations and Sub-
Regional Directors of Nursing
CCG Accountable Officers

17 February 2015

Dear Colleague

Re: Safer Staffing Performance Indicator Development

In [Hard Truths](#), the Secretary of State outlined the requirement for NHS organisations to demonstrate they are delivering safe and effective care.

As you are aware, a range of actions and support have been put in place. These include wards publishing actual versus planned staffing numbers on a monthly basis on [My NHS – NHS Choices](#) and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) publishing safer staffing [guidelines](#) for acute adult care and endorsed staffing models. In November last year I published a [guide](#) to support providers and commissioners identify 'care contact time'.

An outstanding requirement is the publication of nursing safer staffing indicators, which will provide an overall RAG rating for Trusts.

These indicators will support the patient safety information already published on NHS Choices and provide comparable information for Trusts to use and for patients and service users to enable them to make an informed choice of care provider. It will also be used by the regulatory bodies as part of their Trust assurance process.

What this letter includes and what you need to do

I have set out below the:

- Composite indicators making up the data
- Process for sharing the initial performance indicator data for your Trust, including an overall safer staffing summary measure
- Proposed time-frame to publish both the data and an overall performance rating on My NHS – NHS Choices
- Development of data sources to develop safer staffing indicators over time, including the use of the Electronic Staff Record (ESR) data
- Need for NHS Trusts to maintain accurate and up-to-date information on ESR in relation to the proposed indicators outlined in the letter; and
- Email contact for any queries.

Safer Staffing Indicators

These data have been taken from a range of published workforce information, already available and currently used for workforce planning, assurance and intelligent monitoring.

We are working with the Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC) and the NHS ESR Central Team to use existing information to minimise the burden of reporting.

The indicators that make up the initial composite measure include:

- Staff sickness rate, taken from the ESR (published by HSCIC);
- The proportion of mandatory training completed, taken from the National staff survey measure;
- Completion of a Performance Development Review (PDR) in the last 12 months, taken from the National staff survey measure;
- Staff views on staffing, taken from the National staff survey measure; and
- Patient views on staffing, taken from the National patient survey measure.

Sharing the initial safer staffing performance ratings with Trusts

A summary spreadsheet with the initial safer staffing performance data for your Trust, including an overall safer staffing summary measure will be circulated to Trust Directors of Nursing this week. The information will be cascaded to Foundation Trusts from the Regional Chief Nurse and Non Foundation Trusts via the NHS Trust Development Authority.

This information is circulated to Trusts **in confidence** and will not be published on My NHS – NHS Choices until the spring. The information is intended to inform Trusts of work in progress and to provide an indication of what the data are showing, based on the initial data collation. The timetable for the publication of data is provided below. This timeframe provides for a period to test, consult and review the data.

Safer Staffing Contact Time

In the [Care Contact Time Guide](#) published in November 2014, I recommended that Trusts should check their patient contact time using a consistent methodology to assess any changes in contact time and consider any impact this may have on patient care. It is proposed that information on safer staffing contact time compliance will be captured twice yearly from Trusts to confirm this has been reported and discussed at Board level. This will be built into regulatory and commissioning pathways for assurance that it has been completed.

Timetable for publishing the data with an overall Performance Rating

Activity	Date
*Collection of data for review	January 2015 onwards
Composite performance rating developed from data collected	February 2015 onwards
Data and performance ratings published on My NHS - NHS Choices	Spring 2015

*These data will be collected and tested, but not published before March 2015. This provides time to test and agree thresholds for the overall performance measure, prior to publication.

Next Steps

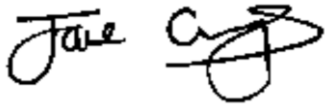
- I will write to you again in the spring to provide further details about the publication of the safer staffing performance ratings
- In the longer term we are continuing to explore other potential data sources to develop safer staffing indicators. For example:
 - We are exploring the use of the ESR to provide information on PDRs (this may link to nurses and midwives revalidation in the future) and to provide a more detailed picture of compliance with mandatory training.
 - We are also investigating the development of data collection methods for capturing information on for example agency staffing.
- I would encourage you to review the information you hold on ESR in relation to the proposed indicators and to ensure your organisation's records are up-to-date and accurately reflects your Trust's current position. At present inconsistent usage of these areas of functionality prevents ESR from being able to provide a complete comparison across the NHS
- We are discussing with regulatory bodies how the safer staffing indicators will be built into regulatory and commissioning pathways and be part of their performance intelligence and monitoring.

Advice and Ongoing Support

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact
england.contacttime@nhs.net

With thanks and best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jane Cummings'.

Jane Cummings
Chief Nursing Officer England