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19 November 2021

By email

Dear Caroline,

RMP4 – Updated Remobilisation Plan for 2021/22

Thank you for submitting the latest iteration of your Remobilisation Plan. As we head into the second winter of the Covid-19 pandemic, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your teams for your dedication and hard work in delivering healthcare for our communities, in the face of considerable challenges.

I would also like to acknowledge the work that has gone into the development of this latest Plan, and in particular the input and support in developing and using the new format we trialled for RMP4. I would be grateful if you could pass on my thanks to all involved. I am very conscious of the extremely difficult, and rapidly changing, context in which your Plan was developed. I recognise that these plans will evolve over time in response to changing circumstances, and we are keen to continue to work with you in the coming months to understand the implications and to provide support accordingly.

Indeed, the process of planning for delivery becomes more, not less, important during a time of high pressure, uncertainty and changeability. These plans provide not only a foundation for us to agree what we aim to deliver over this next period, but also a basis for discussion about the risks which could impact on our ability to deliver, and how we can work together to mitigate these. The new format used this time round also allows us to build a more comprehensive picture of both aspiration and risk across all Health Boards, and will hopefully support collaboration between Boards in developing their plans.

The updated plans will continue to inform the regular engagement which already takes place between SG Policy Teams and relevant service leads within your teams, providing a direct feedback route to pick up any ongoing queries regarding your proposals. While we do not expect plans to be resubmitted, this feedback should be fed into future progress updates.

Finance

Following our Quarter One review, we wrote to confirm to NHS Boards on 26 October that funding will be provided for full Covid-19 and remobilisation costs on a non-repayable basis. This includes anticipated underachievement of savings in year,

with an expectation however that Boards continue to take appropriate measures to reduce this funding requirement. This letter also set out expected actions for the remainder of the year and in advance of the 2022-23 financial year.

We have received your Quarter Two financial return and are working through the detail included. Where further clarification is required we will follow up with your Director of Finance.

Costs in relation to remobilisation should continue to be reported through quarterly finance returns. You must ensure that any recurring impact from these actions is clearly reported, as this is a key focus of our review in advance of the draft Scottish Budget on 9 December.

Winter Planning

Helen Maitland, my National Director for Unscheduled Care, wrote to you previously on 2 November confirming the Winter funding available to your Board, and confirming that this should be targeted to deliver the key priorities noted in the Remobilisation Plan guidance, and as reflected in the Winter related elements of your Plan. I recognise how challenging the forthcoming Winter is likely to be for the entire health and care service and Helen's team stand ready to support you wherever possible to meet those challenges.

Planned Care

We will also be in touch subsequent to this letter to confirm your remaining allocation of Waiting Times Funding for this financial year.

Next Steps

Bearing the above comments in mind, I am content that you now take your updated Plan for the second half of 2021/22 through your own governance processes and would ask that you then make it available on your website.

In order to monitor progress on the delivery of your RMP4 going forward, we are putting in place arrangements to request quarterly progress updates against the key deliverables that you have identified. Updates should be submitted at the end of January 2022, covering Quarter Three, and the end of April 2022, for Quarter Four. These updates should include any changes to your plans for the following quarters. Details on the specific requirements for these updates will be issued in due course.

Three Year Operational Recovery Plans 2022-25

As you know, we are proposing to move to a slightly longer-term period of three years, for future Operational Plans. This will enable a more strategic approach to planning and support programmes of service transformation, aligned with the NHS Recovery Plan and the Care and Wellbeing Portfolio.

These three-year plans will take the form of a Recovery Plan for the period of 2022-25 for your Board. They will encompass a relatively high level narrative setting out

your key priorities for recovery and transformation within this period, and how these contribute to our national priorities, underpinned by a spreadsheet-based Annual Delivery Plan (ADP). This latter element, which will build on the format and content of the delivery planning template used for RMP4, will continue to form the basis for ongoing engagement as well as regular quarterly progress reports to Scottish Government, recognising the continuing fluidity in our operating context and supporting responsive changes to plans in-year.

In recognition of the pressures that you are currently working under, and the high level of uncertainty and volatility that remains in the system, these three year plans will be scheduled for submission at the end of July 2022. We intend that that this will allow sufficient time for you to take stock of your position as we move out of Winter, to consider your priorities, engage meaningfully with your staff, partners, communities and stakeholders on their desired outcomes, and to develop greater integration between your service, finance and workforce plans. In order to ensure that there is no gap in oversight during this period, it is important that you ensure that your Delivery Plans are kept updated as set out above.

We are also moving back to three year financial planning, and whilst we anticipate requiring some detail of plans in advance of the start of the financial year, we will use the Quarter One review in 2022-23 as an opportunity for Boards to refresh their financial plans to align with the three-year operational plans. Further detail will be provided on this process in due course.

In the meantime, we have established a Short Life Working Group with a small group of Planning Leads from across the NHS Territorial and National Boards and SG officials. This team will be working closely together to produce guidance for the 2022-25 Recovery Plans and will remain in close contact with the wider Planning Collaborative Group.

Thank you again to you and your teams for all the hard work they have put in to developing this plan, and I look forward to working in partnership with you as we develop our vision for delivery in the NHS over the next three years.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JG Burns', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

JOHN G BURNS
NHSScotland Chief Operating Officer