



E: [NSSsponsorship@gov.scot](mailto:NSSsponsorship@gov.scot)

Mary Morgan  
Chief Executive  
NHS National Services Scotland

via email

22nd December, 2021

Dear Mary

**NHS National Services Scotland (NSS) REMOBILISATION PLAN 4 2021-2022 (30 SEPTEMBER 2021)**

Thank you for submitting the NSS Remobilisation Plan 4 (RMP4), which updates NSS' priorities through to March 2022 and apologies for the time it has taken for me to respond.

My previous letter, relating to your RMP3 submission, noted NSS' role in providing robust and reliable national solutions to ensure a system-wide response to COVID-19. This has continued in the first half of 2021-22, as NSS has undertaken a number of priorities in relation to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, not least those in relation to vaccinations.

I note in your plan the five measures requiring attention: Child Health Systems; The National Cyber Centre of Excellence; Adoption of SCOTCAP and Cytosponge; Southeast Payroll Consortium and the National Contact Centre. I understand that remedial actions have been put in place and progress is being made. For example, I am pleased to hear that positive steps have been taken to unblock some of the issues relating to the Southeast Payroll Consortium.

The Digital demands placed on NSS continue to be high as a result of COVID-19 and I recognise that this area has been noted as a risk in your plan. I am aware that Scottish Government officials are working together with NSS to set out a schedule of digital work with the aim, where possible, of reducing pressures on NSS caused by ad-hoc requests.

Staff wellbeing and matters relating to workforce were also highlighted as a general area of important focus across NHS Scotland in the RMP3 process. While there is less emphasis placed on this area in your RMP4 update, I am aware of significant work that is being undertaken by the Board to support staff wellbeing and the ongoing workforce challenges that you are managing. Colleagues in the Scottish Government Health Workforce Directorate will continue to offer appropriate support as you move from these RMP updates to three-year planning from 2022-23. I am aware that there have been conversations on this topic already.



## 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 have been 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 financial planning going forward.

I acknowledge that financial sustainability is highlighted as a risk in your Plan and it was really helpful to have assumptions on both recurring and non-recurring costs going in to 2022-23. We will work with you in the coming weeks to agree an approach to COVID-19 funding, given the significant additional costs the Board anticipate.

In addition to this, I recognise the work carried out in NSS to seek further efficiencies, such as the the review to rationalise estates used by the Board. Going forward, we will continue to be keen to understand progress with this work.

## Next Steps

Based on the aforementioned comments, I am content that you take your Plan through your Board's governance processes and publish on your website.

In order to monitor progress on the delivery of your Plan 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 and my team will be in contact with you to discuss the best approach for NSS.

## Three-Year Operational Recovery Plans 2022-25

As you know, we are proposing to move to three-year planning 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, using the spreadsheet-based Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) to set out your key priorities for recovery and transformation within this period. This should also set out how your Plan contributes to the Scottish Government's national priorities. The spreadsheet-based ADP, which builds on the format and content of the delivery planning template used for your Plan, will continue to form the basis for ongoing engagement as well as regular quarterly progress reports to Scottish Government. This structure and process for planning aims to recognise the continuing fluidity in our operating context and allows changes to plans to be made 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 anticipate that this will allow sufficient time for you to take stock of your position as we move out of Winter and to consider your priorities. This should also allow time for you to engage with your staff, partners 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 (SLWG) comprising of a small group of Planning Leads from across the NHS Territorial and National Boards and Scottish Government officials. The SLWG 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.

Finally, I would like to thank you and the rest of the team at NSS for your continued support during the pandemic. I recognise the challenges that COVID-19 has placed upon NSS, and its staff. I would like to thank everyone at NSS for the many significant achievements since RMP3, some of which were recognised in the recent report by Audit Scotland.

Please contact the NSS Sponsorship Team if you have any queries on the content of this letter.

Yours sincerely



**Richard McCallum**  
Director of Health Finance and Governance