

NHS England and NHS Improvement
Skipton House
80 London Road
London
SE1 6LH

27 July 2021

Dear colleague

NHS England and NHS Improvement's direct commissioning functions

We are writing to update you on the development of integrated care systems (ICSs) and the future model of commissioning for Armed Forces health.

ICSs are NHS organisations which, in partnership with local councils and other important strategic partners, such as the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors, take collective responsibility for managing resources, delivering NHS care, and improving the health of the population they serve. There are 42 ICSs across England, which aim to:

- improve population health and healthcare
- tackle unequal outcomes and access
- enhance productivity and value for money

On 6 July 2021, the [Health and Care Bill](#) was introduced to parliament. The Bill builds on the proposals for legislative change set out in the [NHS Long Term Plan](#), which will allow NHS England to arrange for its commissioning functions to be delegated or jointly delivered with ICS bodies.

Subject to the relevant legislation passing, our expectation is that in April 2022, statutory ICS bodies will form a number of joint committees with NHS England, through which they will jointly commission a proportion of specialised services that are deemed to be suitable and ready for ICS leadership, and where patients can benefit from joined up care.

In the case of Armed Forces health, this will be retained as a national NHS England commissioning function that will continue to be subject to national service specifications and evidence-based policies to ensure patients have the same access to services across the country. Whilst the commissioning responsibility for Armed Forces health will not change or be subject to the joint committee arrangements

described above, it will be important for commissioners to work closely with ICS bodies to inform service provision and realise the benefits of integrated working at local levels.

As wider system changes are implemented in support of ICS delegation, we are committed to working with these bodies to ensure the effective delivery of local services for the communities we serve.

We will continue to keep you updated on progress and opportunities for involvement. In the meantime, please do let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kate Davies', with a horizontal line underneath.

Kate Davies CBE

Director of Health and Justice, Armed Forces and Sexual Assault Services
Commissioning