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Mary Morgan,
Chief Executive
NHS National Services Scotland

11 June 2021

Dear Mary,

NHS National Services Scotland (NSS): Remobilisation Plan 2021/22

Thank you for submitting the third iteration of your Board's Remobilisation Plan (RMP) covering the period April 2021 to March 2022. At the outset I would want to acknowledge again the critical role NSS has played in Scotland's response to the pandemic and the excellent work that has been undertaken across a number of your teams.

As detailed in the commissioning letter issued on 14 December, this RMP is intended to provide an update and further iteration of your plans for remobilisation, summarising your work in a number of key areas of activity to the end of March 2022 and building on the process which started with your initial remobilisation plan in May 2020.

Covid-19 Resilience

As Covid-19 restrictions are being relaxed, we are moving into a period of uncertainty and are seeing increased demand on the health and care system as case numbers increase. In terms of risk, we can expect some behavioural changes in the population in advance of all those who are eligible being fully vaccinated. There is also the risk of new variants emerging which may exhibit a level of resistance to the available vaccines.

While the pandemic is ongoing, our key priority is to suppress infection to as low a level as possible. This approach is the best way to ensure the NHS is not overwhelmed, while minimising the impact of long Covid-19. As set out in your plan, it is recognised that NSS plays a pivotal role in providing robust and reliable national solutions to ensure a system-wide response to Covid-19. This has been evidenced in NSS' ability to:

- upscale the National Procurement Service to ensure an adequate supply of PPE is available across Health and Social Care in Scotland;
- provide essential digital platforms and cyber security for health and social care;
- play a pivotal role in Test and Protect and the Covid-19 Testing Programme across Scotland, including local, regional and mobile test sites and laboratories;
- lead the delivery of the vaccination services; and
- offer a range of clinical and non-clinical services, such as the safe supply of blood, tissues and cells alongside Covid-19 priorities.



As part of the key national priorities, particularly living with Covid-19, it is expected that NSS will continue to:

- Be prepared to respond to any further guidance issued as more evidence is available;
- Maintain a focus on the public health response, including work being led on Test & Protect and the vaccines programme;
- Be equipped to adapt these programmes to suit changed circumstances that may emerge;
- Deliver against key areas of work in relation to Antimicrobial Resistance and Healthcare Associated Infection (ARHAI), including providing advice and expertise on the Covid-19 response for each of the five ARHAI priority areas;
- Lead and prioritise the national Infection Prevention and Control and Health Associated Infection data response;
- On delivering against the aforementioned priorities and future programmes of work in response to Covid-19, ensure all efforts are made to minimise disruption to plans for staff leave; and
- Deliver essential non-Covid-19 services, including the focus on screening of the population and the work towards establishing a new suite of services designed to improve the quality of healthcare environment under NHSScotland Assure.

Staff Wellbeing & Sustainability

The recovery of NHS services will not be possible without the recovery of our workforce. As a result of this, a key priority when commissioning these plans was considered to be staff wellbeing and sustainability.

NSS' RMP evidences numerous steps being taken to remobilise services whilst ensuring that staff wellbeing is appropriately prioritised. I recognise the work being done to ensure staff have the opportunity to input into the actions being taken to support their wellbeing, including staff engagement sessions, the creation of the NSS Wellbeing Hub, and work undertaken by the NSS Occupational Health and Safety Advisory Committee.

Colleagues in the Scottish Government Health Workforce Directorate will continue to offer appropriate support as you move to the next phase of your RMP.

Partnership Working and Staff Engagement

It is clear that your RMP has been developed in collaboration with key strategic partners. The key themes that emerged when reviewing plans from all Boards were the availability of robust national programmes, mutual aid and partnership working. I encourage you to continue this approach while implementing your RMP and when developing any further iterations, as well as ensuring that all stakeholders are meaningfully involved. I similarly encourage you to continue to ensure strong and active engagement with your workforce.

Supporting Adult Social Care

The Independent Review of Adult Social Care in Scotland, published shortly before Boards submitted their plans, will be a valuable tool and reference point during the implementation phase of your RMP, and as you continue to develop your longer-term response. Ministers are considering how the review's recommendations will be taken forward and we will want to have further conversations about the role NSS might play in relation to a National Care Service.

Innovation

Research, development and innovation are core to NHS Scotland's role as a person-centred, evidence-based healthcare system, and have played a crucial role in the response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

It is understood that NSS aim to establish a framework to enable innovations to be scaled up through developing a portal of resources to improve oversight on all Scottish health and care innovations. It is recognised that this will assist in improving the pace of delivery and adoption of health and care innovations on a national basis.

The Scottish Government has commissioned the establishment of the Centre for Sustainable Delivery (CfSD), which sits within the Golden Jubilee. As you know, this is a national unit that will build on existing improvement programmes and develop new innovative programmes to support local Boards to deliver national priorities, incorporating new tools and techniques and bespoke assistance to help tackle areas of challenge. It will be important for NSS to consider the linkages and relationship it has with the CfSD.

Finance

We have reviewed your financial plan for 2021-22 and provided detailed feedback on 15 March 2021. We note your financial plan shows a breakeven position for 2021-22 assuming £17.1 million of savings can be met (5% of baseline). However there continues to be significant uncertainty about the financial impact of Covid-19 in both the short and longer-term, and what this will mean both for service delivery and associated financial plans.

As in 2020-21, we will therefore look to assess progress against your plan through the formal Quarter 1 review process, when the in-year Covid-19 funding and costs will be clearer. As part of this review we will look for an update of the revised financial projections for 2021-22 and the progress the Board has made in taking forward savings plans. Further details on the Quarter 1 review process will be provided to NHS Directors of Finance in the coming weeks.

Due to the work NSS is undertaking on Personal Protection Equipment, the Test and Protect Programme and COVID-19 and Seasonal Flu Vaccinations, I wanted to take this opportunity to confirm the initial delegated budgets for these areas. This will provide assurance on funding to the Board to support its decision making in respect of these key programmes of work. Recognising the continued uncertainty about the level of expenditure on Covid-19 activity, the Scottish Government has agreed to provide £141.4 million (as detailed below) which represents circa 50% of the current full year forecast costs for these programmes.

Key Programme	Initial Delegated Budget (£ million)
Personal Protection Equipment	85.5
Test and Protect	27.9
Vaccinations	28.0
Total	141.4

Following further engagement between NSS and the Scottish Government as part of the Quarter 1 review process, we anticipate providing additional funding to cover the additional costs for the remainder of 2021-22. In the meantime, while a level of budget has been delegated, I would expect that the Board continues to give appropriate due consideration to value for money against these budget lines.

As previously indicated, we aim to return to three-year financial planning and the next steps on this will be detailed in due course. The timing of this will however depend on the impact of Covid over the coming year.

Plan Approval and Feedback

I am content to approve your RMP. Your finalised and signed-off RMP will be used as the basis for engagement with NSS over the coming year. Feedback has been and will continue to be provided to you by individual policy teams within the Health & Social Care Directorates, as is normal, however I will endeavour to ensure this is done in as coordinated a way as possible. It is important that this

feedback is taken on board as you move into the implementation phase of your RMP. On that basis I do not intend to include any significant further feedback in this letter.

Publication of your RMP

Once internal governance processes to approve your RMP are concluded, both your RMP and the content of this letter can be made publically available on your website.

Next Steps

It is our intention to revisit the RMPs for all Boards later in the year once the position on Covid-19 and related matters are clearer. As such, we may commission a further iteration of your RMP, taking account of what has been discussed in this letter and offering the opportunity for us to update guidance on key areas.

If you have any questions about this letter, please contact Stephanie Knight, in the first instance (Stephanie.Knight@gov.scot).

In the meantime I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, your Board and your entire workforce again for your ongoing extraordinary efforts. Your contribution to the nation's response to Covid-19 and to all the health and social care needs of the population are hugely appreciated by everyone at the Scottish Government.

Yours sincerely



Richard McCallum