

NHS England and NHS Improvement

10 May 2022

William Wragg MP  
Chair, Public Administration and Constitutional Accounts  
Committee  
Rt. Hon Jeremy Hunt MP  
Chair, Health and Social Care Committee  
House of Commons  
SW1A 0AA

Dear Mr Wragg and Mr Hunt,

### **PHSO Recommendations: Unlocking solutions in imaging**

In July 2021 the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman published a report entitled “Unlocking solutions in imaging: Working together to learn from failings within the NHS”

The report listed a number of recommendations which sought to reduce the *risk of safety* for imaging patients and ensure imaging providers are empowered to deliver the robust clinical care required. This letter provides your committees with an update on key recommendations in the PHSO report, which include.

- 1) The adherence and delivery of previous recommendations as outlined by Health Safety Investigation Branch (HSIB), Care Quality Commission (CQC) and other independent public bodies
- 2) The improvement and development of the imaging digital infrastructure
- 3) DHSC and NHSI to provide guidance on the roles and responsibilities of clinicians within the imaging pathway
- 4) A progress update to the Health and Social Care Select Committee and the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee
- 5) All NHS funded bodies should ensure clinicians within the imaging pathway have sufficient time within their job plans to ensure learning and reflection is achieved
- 6) Clinical doctors and radiologists should triangulate learning no less than 4 times a year
- 7) Royal College of Radiologist should review their existing guidance of reporting unexpected findings

Digital infrastructure is now treated as a patient safety issue, DHSC published a national strategy, “the Digital Clinical Safety Strategy” in September 2021<sup>1</sup> setting a national direction for digital safety across the NHS. The strategy was developed collaboratively across NHS England and NHS Improvement, NHSX and NHS Digital and joint governance for its delivery is in place.

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<sup>1</sup> [Digital Clinical Safety Strategy - NHS Transformation Directorate \(nhsx.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/what-we-do/our-services/digital-clinical-safety-strategy/)

NHS England and NHS Improvement have supported a coordinated approach across providers to ensure the delivery of recommendations is collaborative. This approach helps to ensure that risks are appropriately documented, and mitigations expedited.

In summary, key areas of progress to date include:

- Previously published recommendations such as those outlined by HSIB and CQC, are in the process of delivery. For example, the Royal College of Radiologists are planning to release national guidance on job roles and responsibilities by 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022, with additional guidance to be developed to support job planning in NHS organisations.
- Extensive work to develop a pathway for Cauda Equina Syndrome is underway, an agreed clinical pathway will be in place this summer. The pathway will be widely communicated and implemented with support from digital stakeholder groups.
- Recommendations focusing on NHS bodies have been implemented locally by individual NHS organisations to enable them to manage their own job plans, share learning between colleagues and clarify clinical roles. Additional work will now be taken forward on centralised support to monitor the long-term implementation of these local recommendations. This work is expected to be completed by this summer.
- Due to the scope of the digital infrastructure requirements, much of the digital work to date has centred around understanding and developing technical architectures. This initial phase is complete. The following phases will include wider stakeholder engagement to produce a nationally implemented product which enables national and regional connectivity.

A multi-agency task and finish group, supported by the diagnostic programme, has been set up to support local providers, coordinate work, monitor progress and support delivery of remaining actions.

We hope you find this information helpful, NHSEI will be providing regular updates to the PHSO. We would also be content to update your committees as required.

Yours Sincerely,

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NHS England and Improvement

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