

Sarah Wilkinson
Chief Executive
NHS Digital
1 Trevelyan Square
Boar Lane
Leeds
LS1 6AE

7th January 2021

Dear Sarah

1. Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Directions 2021

- 1.1 I am writing on behalf of the National Health Service Commissioning Board (known as **NHS England**) to provide Directions to the Health and Social Care Information Centre, known as and hereafter referred to in these Directions as **NHS Digital**.
- 1.2 These Directions are given in exercise of the powers conferred by section 254(1) and (6), section 260(4)(a), and section 304(9), (10) and (12) of the Health and Social Care Act 2012¹ (**the 2012 Act**).
- 1.3 In exercising the activities and functions described in these Directions, NHS Digital must have regard to such priorities, policies, advice or guidance of NHS England as NHS England may notify in writing from time to time to NHS Digital.
- 1.4 These Directions are to be known as the **Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Directions 2021** and come into force on the date signed.

2. Purpose

¹ 2012 c.7

- 2.1 The purpose of these Directions (**Purpose**) is to support service improvements and to monitor service performance, clinical interventions, individual's experiences and treatment outcomes regarding access to psychological therapies where people have been referred to NHS funded Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) adult services for depression and anxiety in England, as such terms are used and construed in Information Standard DCB1520: Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Data Set² (**the Information Standard**).
- 2.2 In particular, the information collected under these Directions will enable access and waiting time standard measurements³ supporting part of the Long-Term Plan for Mental Health for the NHS in England⁴ and policy commitments related to equal access to services including for people with long term physical health conditions (LTC) and/or persistent and distressing Medically Unexplained Symptoms (MUS). The information collected will also be used to inform clinical care to support more people with depression and anxiety to receive integrated psychological therapy and employment support.
- 3. Establishing and operating information systems for the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Directions data collection**
- 3.1 In accordance with sections 254(1) and 254(6) of the 2012 Act, NHS England directs NHS Digital to establish and operate such systems for the collection and analysis of information from providers of NHS funded psychological therapies services in England described in the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Requirements Specification and in the form and manner described in the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Data Set Specification, which are published as part of the Information Standard and can be accessed via the link in the Annex to these Directions. Such system to be known as the **Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Directions Information System**.
- 3.2 NHS Digital is directed to carry out the activities above in accordance with the Information Standard, or any subsequent published version of the Information Standard that covers the same topic, and generally in such a way as to enable and facilitate the Purpose described above.
- 4. Analysis and linkage**
- 4.1 Pursuant to NHS England's powers under 254(1) and 254(6) of the 2012 Act, NHS Digital is further directed to analyse the information collected pursuant to these Directions, including by such reference or linkage to other

² <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/information-standards/information-standards-and-data-collections-including-extractions/publications-and-notifications/standards-and-collections/dcb-1520-improving-access-to-psychological-therapies-data-set>

³ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/mentalhealth/resources/access-waiting-time/>

⁴ <https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/nhs-long-term-plan.pdf>

data held by NHS Digital as NHS Digital determines is necessary to achieve the Purpose.

- 4.2 The information to be collected for the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Directions 2021 may also be analysed by NHS Digital in the manner described and provided for in the **Life Sciences Directions 2019**⁵ issued to NHS Digital by the Secretary of State on 21 October 2019 (as the same may be amended from time to time), for as long as those Directions remain in force.

5. Requirement for these Directions

- 5.1 In accordance with section 254(3) of the 2012 Act, NHS England considers that the information which could be obtained by complying with these Directions is information which it is necessary or expedient for NHS England to have in relation to its exercise of functions in connection with the provision of NHS services.
- 5.2 In accordance with section 254(5) of the 2012 Act, NHS Digital has been consulted before these Directions have been given.

6. Publication

Where, pursuant to section 260(1) of the 2012 Act, NHS Digital publishes information obtained by complying with these Directions, in accordance with section 260(4)(a) of the 2012 Act it must do so in a form, manner and timing agreed with NHS England.

7. Fees and Accounts

- 7.1 Pursuant to section 254(7) of the 2012 Act, NHS Digital is entitled to charge NHS England a reasonable fee in respect of the cost of NHS Digital complying with these Directions.
- 7.2 NHS Digital must keep proper accounts, and proper records in relation to the accounts, in connection with the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Directions 2021.

8. Duration

NHS Digital is directed to operate the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Information System (**the Directed Function**) unless and until revoked by a further direction or instructed in writing by an authorised officer of NHS England on reasonable notice to suspend and/or permanently cease the Directed Function. Where the Directed Function is to cease, such written request will also contain a direction to revoke these Directions in accordance with the timescales and arrangements to be agreed with NHS Digital.

⁵ <https://digital.nhs.uk/about-nhs-digital/corporate-information-and-documents/directions-and-data-provision-notice/secretary-of-state-directions/life-sciences-directions-2019>

9. Review of these Directions

These Directions will be reviewed when the Information Standard is amended. This review will include consultation with NHS Digital as required by section 254(5) of the 2012 Act.

10. Revocation

Once these Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Directions 2021 from NHS England come into force they will replace:

- 10.1 The NHS Digital (Establishment of Information Systems for NHS Services: Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Data Collection) Directions 2018 issued on 1 April 2018 by the NHS Commissioning Board (NHS England), which is revoked by NHS England.
- 10.2 The NHS Digital (Establishment of Information Systems for NHS Services: Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Long Term Conditions (LTC) Data Collection) Directions 2018 issued on 1 April 2018 by NHS England, which is revoked by NHS England.
- 10.3 The Employment Advisers in IAPT Direction 2017 issued on 6 September 2017 by the Secretary of State, which will be revoked by the Secretary of State.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. B.', written in a cursive style.

Signed by authority of NHS England

Annex - Specifications to the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Directions 2021

The Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Requirements Specification and the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Data Set Specification are published as part of the Information Standard “*DCB1520: Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Data Set*”, which is available at: <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/information-standards/information-standards-and-data-collections-including-extractions/publications-and-notifications/standards-and-collections/dcb-1520-improving-access-to-psychological-therapies-data-set>