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Quarry House  
Leeds LS2 7UE

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

2 November 2020

Dear Sarah

## 1. Ambulance Services Data Set Discovery Directions 2020

- 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 sections 254(1), (3) and (6), section 260(2)(d), section 261(2)(e) and section 304(9), (10) and (12) of the Health and Social Care Act 2012<sup>1</sup> (**the 2012 Act**) and Regulation 32 of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (Constitution and Functions) and the Health and Social Care Information Centre (Functions) Regulations 2013<sup>2</sup> (**the Regulations**).
- 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 2012 c.7

<sup>2</sup> S.I. 2013/259

1.4 These Directions are to be known as the **Ambulance Services Data Set Discovery Directions 2020** and come into force on the date signed.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of these Directions (**Purpose**) is to pilot the collection and analysis of information from Ambulance Services in England that have agreed to participate<sup>3</sup> in the pilot, which will support the implementation of the NHS Long Term Plan<sup>4</sup> by bringing consistency to information held by the Ambulance Services, with a view to higher quality and more consistent reporting, removing the need for duplicated effort, with a view to improving patient outcomes.

## 3. Establishing and operating information systems for the Ambulance Services Data Set Discovery Directions 2020 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 a system for the collection and analysis of information from participant Ambulance Services as described in the Ambulance Services Data Set Discovery Directions Requirements Specification (**the Requirements Specification**) attached at Annex A of these Directions, such system to be known as the **Ambulance Services Data Set Discovery Directions Information System**.

3.2 NHS Digital is directed to carry out the activities above in accordance with the Requirements Specification and generally in such a way as to enable and facilitate the Purpose described above. The Requirements Specification may be updated periodically (within the confines of the scope set out in these Directions) by NHS Digital and agreed in writing by NHS England.

## 4. Analysis and linkage

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 data held by NHS Digital, including linkage with relevant equivalent data items contained in the collection established under the Health and Social Care Information Centre (Establishment of Information Systems for NHS Services: Emergency Care Data Set Collection) Directions 2017 (as the same may be amended or replaced)<sup>5</sup>, as described in the Requirement Specification and as NHS Digital determines is necessary to achieve the Purpose.

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<sup>3</sup> Participant Ambulance Services are set out in the Requirements Specification

<sup>4</sup> See section 1.33 of the NHS Long-Term Plan at <https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://digital.nhs.uk/about-nhs-digital/corporate-information-and-documents/directions-and-data-provision-notice/nhs-england-directions/establishment-of-information-systems-for-nhs-services-emergency-care-data-set-collection-directions-2017>

## **5. Systems delivery functions for the Ambulance Services Data Set Discovery Directions**

- 5.1 In accordance with Regulation 32 of the Regulations, NHS England directs NHS Digital to exercise such systems delivery functions of NHS England as are necessary for it to deliver the Ambulance Services Data Set Discovery Directions Information System.
- 5.2 NHS England directs NHS Digital to exercise the functions described above in accordance with the service levels, support and monitoring requirements, and the reporting and governance requirements notified by NHS England in writing to NHS Digital as at the date these Directions come into force, or as those requirements are amended and notified by NHS England in writing to NHS Digital from time to time.

## **6. Requirement for these Directions**

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 In accordance with section 254(5) of the 2012 Act, NHS Digital has been consulted before these Directions have been given.

## **7. Publication**

Due to the discovery nature of the information collection, in accordance with section 260(2)(d) of the 2012 Act, NHS Digital is directed not to publish any information that is obtained by complying with these Directions.

## **8. Dissemination**

- 8.1 In accordance with section 261(2)(e) of the 2012 Act, despite any prohibition on publication, NHS Digital may disseminate under section 261(1) of the 2012 Act the information it has obtained by complying with these Directions to NHS England and NHS Improvement, where section 261(1) would otherwise not apply due to the restriction on publication, and where it would be lawful for NHS Digital to do so.
- 8.2 Pursuant to section 262(3) of the 2012 Act, NHS Digital is directed to exercise its powers under section 261(4) of the 2012 to disseminate the information collected pursuant to these Directions to the Ambulance Services that provided the information.
- 8.3 Under section 262(5) of the 2012 Act, NHS Digital is directed not to exercise its powers under section 261(1) and 261(4) of the 2012 Act other than to disseminate information to NHS England and NHS Improvement and to the

Ambulance Services that provided the information where it would be lawful for NHS Digital to do so.

## 9. Fees and Accounts

- 9.1 Pursuant to section 254(7) of the 2012 Act and regulation 32(2)(b) of the Regulations, NHS Digital is entitled to charge NHS England a reasonable fee in respect of the cost of NHS Digital complying with these Directions
- 9.2 NHS Digital must keep proper accounts, and proper records in relation to the accounts, in connection with the Ambulance Services Data Set Discovery Directions 2020.

## 10. Duration

NHS Digital is directed to operate the Ambulance Services Data Set Discovery Directions Information System and undertake the system delivery function referred to above (**the Directed Function(s)**) 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 a 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.

## 11. Review of these Directions

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

Yours sincerely

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

Signed by authority of NHS England

**ANNEXES - AMBULANCE SERVICES DATA SET DISCOVERY DIRECTIONS  
2020**

**Annex A - Ambulance Data Set Discovery Directions Requirements Specification**