



Department
of Health &
Social Care

Community and Social Care Group
39 Victoria Street
London SW1A 2NS

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

13 February 2020

Dear Sarah,

**Out of Area Placements for Adults in Acute Mental Health Inpatient Services
Directions 2020**

I am writing on behalf of the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (**the Secretary of State**) to provide Directions to the Health and Social Care Information Centre, known as and hereafter referred to in these Directions as **NHS Digital**.

These Directions are given in exercise of the powers conferred by sections 254(1) and (6), 260(1) and (2)(d), 262(1) and (2)(a), and 304(9), (10) and (12) of the Health and Social Care Act 2012¹ (**the Act**).

In exercising the activities and functions described in these Directions, NHS Digital must have regard to such priorities, policies, advice or guidance of the Secretary of State as the Secretary of State may notify in writing from time to time to NHS Digital.

These Directions are to be known as the **Out of Area Placements for Adults in Acute Mental Health Inpatient Services Directions 2020** come into force on 13 February 2020 and end on 31 March 2020.

Purpose

The purpose of these Directions (**Purpose**) is to support the government's ambition to eliminate inappropriate out of area placements for adult acute inpatients by 2020/21. An inappropriate "out of area placement" is defined as a situation in which a person with assessed acute mental health needs, who requires adult mental health acute inpatient care, is admitted to a unit that does not form part of the usual local network of services (an inpatient unit that does not usually admit people living in the catchment area of the persons

¹ 2012 c.7

local community mental health service), and where the person cannot be visited regularly by their care co-ordinator.

Establishing and operating information systems for the Out of Area Placements for Adults in Acute Mental Health Inpatient Services data collection

In accordance with sections 254(1) and 254(6) of the Act, the Secretary of State directs NHS Digital to operate such systems for the collection and analysis of information about out of area placements for adults in acute mental health inpatient services as described in the Data Collection Specification for Out of Area Placements for Adults in Acute Mental Health Inpatient Services (**the Specification**) issued with these Directions, such system to be known as the **Out of Area Placements for Adults in Acute Mental Health Inpatient Services Information System**.

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

Analysis and linkage

Pursuant to the Secretary of State's powers under 254(1) and 254(6) of the Act, NHS Digital is further directed to analyse the data collected pursuant to these Directions, including by such reference or linkage to other data held by NHS Digital as NHS Digital determines is necessary to achieve the Purpose.

The information to be collected for the **Out of Area Placements for Adults in Acute Mental Health Inpatient Services Directions 2020** may also be analysed by NHS Digital in the manner described and provided for in the **Life Sciences Directions 2019** 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.

Requirement for these Directions

In accordance with section 254(2)(b) of the Act, the Secretary of State considers that it is in the interests of the health service in England or of the recipients or providers of adult social care in England for these Directions to be given.

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

Publication

In accordance with section 260(4)(a) of the Act, NHS Digital is directed to publish the information obtained by complying with these Directions in the form, manner and timing set out in the Specification.

Duration

NHS Digital is directed to operate the Out of Area Placements for Adults in Acute Mental Health Inpatient Services Information System referred to above until **31 March 2020** unless instructed in writing by the Secretary of State to continue to operate this Information System beyond this period, in which case these Directions will continue in force for the duration instructed by the Secretary of State. Such an instruction if given will be published alongside these Directions.

Review of these Directions

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

For the avoidance of doubt, the Out of Area Placements for Adults in Acute Mental Health Inpatient Services 2018 issued on 22 October 2018 and the related extension letter dated 21 May 2019 are revoked by this Direction and are from the date of this Direction no longer in force.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Smethurst', with a stylized, scribbled end.

Kathy Smethurst
Deputy Director, Mental Health Policy and Delivery
Department of Health and Social Care