



Department
of Health &
Social Care

Department of Health and Social
Care
39 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0EU

Sir James Mackey
Chief Executive
NHS England

19th March 2026

Dear Sir James,

NHS Vaccination and Screening Directions 2026

- 1.1 I am writing on behalf of the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care **(the Secretary of State)** to give Directions to **NHS England**.
- 1.2 These Directions are given in exercise of the powers conferred by sections 254(1), 260(2)(d), 261(2)(e) and 304(9), (10) and (12) of the Health and Social Care Act 2012¹ **(the 2012 Act)** and sections 13ZC and 272(7) and (8) of the National Health Service Act 2006² **(the 2006 Act)**.
- 1.3 The service enabled by these Directions is operated by NHS England in the exercise of its powers under sections 1, 2 and Chapter A1 of Part 2 of the 2006 Act.
- 1.4 These Directions are to be known as the **NHS Vaccination and Screening Directions 2026** and come into force on the date after the day on which they are signed.

2. Need for these Directions

- 2.1 In accordance with section 254(2)(a) of the 2012 Act, the Secretary of State considers that the information which could be obtained by complying with these Directions is information which it is necessary or expedient for the

¹ 2012 c.7 (the 2012 Act). Relevant amendments were made by the Health and Social Care Information Centre (Transfer of Functions, Abolition and Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2023 (S.I. 2023/98).

² 2006 c.41. Section 13ZC was inserted by section 45 of the Health and Care Act 2022 (c.31).

Secretary of State to have in relation to the exercise by the Secretary of State of functions in connection with the provision of health services or of adult social care in England.

- 2.2 In accordance with section 254(2)(b) of the 2012 Act, the Secretary of State also 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.
- 2.3 In accordance with section 254(5) of the 2012 Act, the Secretary of State has consulted NHS England before giving these Directions.
- 2.4 In accordance with section 13ZC(5) of the 2006 Act, the Secretary of State considers these Directions to be in the public interest.

3. **Priorities, policies and non-statutory guidance**

In exercising functions under these Directions, NHS England must have regard to such priorities, policies and non-statutory guidance³ of the Secretary of State as the Secretary of State may notify in writing from time to time to NHS England.

4. **Purpose**

The purpose of these Directions (**the Purpose**) is to enable NHS England to develop, commission and evaluate vaccination and screening programmes in England. This forms part of its obligations in exercising the Secretary of State's public health functions, as set out in the [NHS public health functions agreement](#)⁴ established between the Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England, by virtue of section 7A of the 2006 Act (**the section 7A Services**). The section 7A Services protect and drive improvements in population health and complement the work of wider public sector-commissioned health services.

5. **Establishing and operating information systems**

- 5.1 The Secretary of State directs NHS England to establish and operate a system for the collection and analysis of the information described in the related Requirements Specification(s) as referred to in section 5.2 below and to do so in accordance with those Requirements Specification(s).
- 5.2 It is anticipated that there will be multiple systems of data collection and/or analysis within the scope of these Directions. Each system for collection and/or analysis will have a requirements specification published alongside these Directions as may be updated periodically by the Secretary of State in consultation with NHS England (**the Requirements Specifications**).

³In addition, NHS England has a duty to have regard to [statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State under section 274A of the 2012 Act: NHS England's protection of patient data, 23 May 2023](#), as the same may be updated from time to time.

⁴ The responsibility for these public health services has been delegated to NHSE under s.7A of the 2006 Act and the arrangements for this delegation is set out in the NHS public health functions agreement <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/nhs-public-health-functions-agreements>

- 5.3 The Requirements Specification published at the date of signing of these Directions is the NHS Public Health Functions – Cancer Screening Requirements Specification.
- 5.4 The Secretary of State directs NHS England to analyse the information which NHS England obtains by complying with these Directions (**the Information**), as may be required by the Secretary of State or as NHS England considers necessary to achieve the Purpose.
- 5.5 Such analysis includes:
- 5.5.1 analysis by reference or linkage to any other information described in the Requirements Specification(s);
 - 5.5.2 analysis for data quality purposes, including undertaking comparison and consistency analysis of the same or similar information obtained by complying with other directions under section 254 of the 2012 Act;
 - 5.5.3 any other analysis of the Information as NHS England considers appropriate to maintain data quality, accuracy and consistency in relation to the Information.
- 5.6 In exercising functions under these Directions, NHS England must act in accordance with the Requirements Specification(s) and generally in such a way as to achieve the Purpose.

6. **Service Levels etc**

In exercising functions under these Directions, NHS England must act in accordance with the service levels, support and monitoring requirements, and the reporting and governance requirements notified by the Secretary of State in writing to NHS England as at the date these Directions come into force, or as those requirements are amended and notified by an authorised officer of the Department of Health and Social Care on behalf of the Secretary of State in writing to NHS England from time to time.

7. **Publication**

For the purposes of section 260(1) and (2)(d) of the 2012 Act, certain information might be set out in any of the Requirements Specifications as not for publication (**Non-Published Data**) under section 260(2)(d) of the 2012 Act (and must not be published)⁵.

⁵ Such information is specified as information falling within section 260(2)(d) and the prohibition in section 260(1) on publishing information accordingly applies to it.

8. Dissemination

Despite the prohibition on publication set out in paragraph 7, the power to disseminate under section 261(1) of the 2012 Act applies to the Non-Published Data (and it may be disseminated)⁶.

9. Fees and Accounts

NHS England must keep proper accounts, and proper records in relation to the accounts, in connection with these Directions.

10. Duration

NHS England must exercise functions under these Directions until they are revoked by a further direction in writing by an authorised officer of the Department of Health and Social Care on behalf of the Secretary of State.

11. Review of these Directions

These Directions will be reviewed from time to time. Any amendments to the Directions or the Requirements Specification(s) will only be made after consultation with NHS England.

Yours sincerely



Signed by authority of the Secretary of State

Date signed: 19th March 2026

⁶ See section 261(2)(e) of the 2012 Act for NHS England's power to disseminate information which it is prohibited from publishing only by virtue of a direction given under section 260(2)(d).