



Department of Health & Social Care

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

Amanda Pritchard
Chief Executive
NHS England
Quarry House
Leeds LS2 7UE

05 July 2023

Dear Amanda,

1. NHS Wayfinder Services Directions 2023

- 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) and 304(9) to (12) of the Health and Social Care Act 2012¹ (**the 2012 Act**), sections 13ZC and 272(7) and (8) of the National Health Service Act 2006² (**the 2006 Act**) and regulation 32 of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (Constitution and Functions) and NHS England (Information Functions) Regulations 2013³ (**the Regulations**).
- 1.3 These Directions are to be known as the **NHS Wayfinder Services Directions 2023** and come into force on the date after the day on which they are signed.

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

³ S.I. 2013/259 as amended by S.I. 2023/98.

2. Requirement for these Directions

- 2.1 In accordance with section 254(2)(b) of the 2012 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.
- 2.2 In accordance with section 254(5) of the 2012 Act, the Secretary of State has consulted NHS England before giving these Directions.
- 2.3 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 Advice

In exercising functions under these Directions, NHS England must have regard to such priorities, policies or advice of the Secretary of State as the Secretary of State may notify in writing from time to time to NHS England⁴.

4. Purpose

The purpose of these Directions (**Purpose**) is to enable NHS England to develop and operate the NHS Wayfinder programme and related services (collectively **the NHS Wayfinder Services**). The NHS Wayfinder Services will provide:

- 4.1 Services that enable patients to access details of appointments and additional information about NHS Trust referrals and their elective care; and
- 4.2 Anonymous statistical data including through analysis and linkage of data which may be used to support service delivery improvement and strategies which may improve health outcomes for the population and reduce inequalities in health.

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 NHS Wayfinder Services Requirements Specification (version 1 as published with these Directions), as updated periodically by the Secretary of State in consultation with NHS England. (**the Requirements Specification**).
- 5.2 The system to be established and operated is to be known as the **NHS Wayfinder Services Directions Information System**.

⁴ Section 274A of the 2012 Act requires the Secretary of State to publish guidance for NHS England about the exercise of its relevant data functions, and its other functions in connection with its relevant data functions. "Relevant data functions" includes functions conferred on NHS England by or under Chapters 2 and 3 of the 2012 Act (see section 253(3) of the 2012 Act) and therefore includes functions conferred by these Directions. NHS England must have regard to guidance published under section 274A (see section 274A(3)).

5.3 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.

5.4 Such analysis includes:

5.4.1 analysis by reference or linkage to any other information described in the Requirements Specification; and

5.4.2 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 or requests under section 255 of the 2012 Act.

5.5 The Secretary of State directs NHS England to take such steps as NHS England considers appropriate to maintain data quality, accuracy and consistency of information in relation to the Information. In exercising functions under these Directions, NHS England must act in accordance with the Requirements Specification and generally in such a way as to achieve the Purpose.

6. **Systems delivery functions**

6.1 The Secretary of State directs NHS England to exercise such systems delivery functions of the Secretary of State as are necessary for it to deliver the **NHS Wayfinder Services Directions Information System**.

6.2 NHS England must exercise the systems delivery functions described at paragraphs 6.1 in accordance with the NHS Wayfinder Services Technical Specification (version 3 as published with these Directions), as updated periodically by NHS England where agreed in writing by the Secretary of State (**the Technical Specification**).

7. **Service Levels etc**

In carrying out activities and 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 for Health and Social Care on behalf of the Secretary of State in writing to NHS England from time to time.

8. Fees and Accounts

8.1 The Secretary of State may make payments to NHS England for things done in the exercise of the systems delivery functions referred to at paragraph 6.

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

9. 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.

10. Review of these Directions

These Directions will be reviewed from time to time. Any amendments to the Directions or the Specifications will only be given after consultation with NHS England.

11. Revocation

The **Wayfinder (NHS App) Services Directions 2022** issued on 1 September 2022 by NHS England to the Health and Social Care Information Centre (NHS Digital)⁵ are revoked.

Yours sincerely



Signed by authority of the Secretary of State

Date signed: 05 July 2023

⁵ Under Regulation 3(1) of the Health and Social Care Information Centre (Transfer of Functions, Abolition and Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2023, from 1 February 2023, these directions are treated as if contained in a direction given by the Secretary of State to NHS England.