
Mary Gregory, Deputy Director for Regulation

Mark Svenson
Head of Operational Information
NHS England

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(by email)

Dear Mark

Today, we have published the finding from our review of Adult Social Care statistics in England. The need for good data to support delivery of adult social care should not be underestimated. While there is rightly a focus on delivery of social care, a scarcity of funding has led to under investment in data and analysis, making it harder for individuals and organisations to make informed decisions. This needs to be addressed if social care is going to evolve to support a changing society and meet the increasing demands expected over coming years. Data matters in solving problems, supporting efficiency and improving outcomes.

Our review identified important improvements needed covering: leadership and collaboration; data gaps; and existing official statistics. We would like to see stronger leadership and collaboration across government to support better data on adult social care and consider NHS England should be collaborating with others to shape these improvements.

As part of our review of existing official statistics, we considered the quality and value of official statistics about adult social care against the standards set out in the Code of Practice for Statistics. It highlighted improvements around accessibility, coherence, quality, timeliness and granularity of the data. The review included two outputs published by NHS England ([Delayed Transfers of Care](#) and [Better Care Fund Quarterly Reporting](#)), immediate actions related to these outputs are outlined in the Annex to this letter.

Improved statistics are essential to support policy makers who are developing proposals to reform the funding and delivery of adult social care as well as individuals who will be able to hold government to account and make better informed decisions about issues which impact the lives of themselves and their families.

We will continue to work with a range of organisations to make the case for improvements to social care statistics. Specifically, my health and social care lead will liaise with you regarding progress towards these recommendations.

Yours sincerely



Mary Gregory
Deputy Director for Regulation

Annex

Official statistics recording the interplay between health services and social care services include the *Delayed Transfers of Care* (DToC) monthly data published by NHS England, that is supported by annual reports. The annual report includes a helpful section on the methodology and outlines which organisations have not submitted timely data. NHS England has worked with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services and the Local Government Association (LGA) to improve the guidance for data suppliers and the quality of data submitted has improved, allowing for better decision-making in this area.

NHS England publishes quarterly performance reports in excel tables and an interactive dashboard to enable easy visualisation of individual NHS provider's performance against their peers. The annual report provides an analysis of trends. Reinforcing the message that information about people needs to span both health and social care, stakeholders told us that, as well as the current DToC data, it would be helpful to understand condition-specific data relating to people subject to DToC.

The Better Care Fund (BCF) is a joint-funded programme to ensure collaboration between health and social care services. The *Better Care Fund Quarterly Reporting* datasets published by NHS England are a compilation of data submitted by government departments with an interest in the performance of providers utilising the BCF. These are: the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), DHSC and the LGA. The data is presented for expert users and so understanding what the data convey is not easy for the less-expert user.

MHCLG publishes a statistical report titled *Local Authority Revenue, Expenditure and Financing 2018-19 Final Outturn*, which provides more detail about how BCF monies are spent. We are aware of the need to understand the ways in which BCF monies are used, as not all BCF monies are spent on social care and additional non-BCF sources of funding may be provided to local authorities.

We suggest that NHS England should continue to improve the data collections and build on its work by providing a comprehensive narrative in this important policy area, linking to other statistics and research, such as that published by MHCLG or NHS Digital.