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Quarry House  
Quarry Hill  
Leeds  
LS2 7UE

E-mail: [england.coo@nhs.net](mailto:england.coo@nhs.net)

To:  
Stockton-on-Tees Health and Wellbeing Board  
NHS Hartlepool and Stockton-On-Tees CCG

Copy to:  
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

29<sup>th</sup> October 2014

Dear colleague,

Thank you for submitting your revised Better Care Fund (BCF) plan. We know that the BCF is an ambitious programme and preparing the plans at pace has proved an immensely challenging task. However, your plan is now part of an ongoing process to transform local services and improve the lives of people in your community.

It is clear that your team and partners have worked very hard over the summer, testing out ways of working and finding innovative solutions to some of the challenges our services face in order to improve people's care.

NHS England is able to finally approve plans once the 2015/16 Mandate is published. I am pleased to let you know that, following the Nationally Consistent Assurance Review (NCAR) process, provided there is no material change in circumstance and the 15/16 Mandate is published as expected, your plan will be classified as '**Approved with Support**' once the 15/16 Mandate has been published. This recognises that whilst your plan is strong the review process identified a number of areas for improvement which once addressed will enable you to move to a fully approved status. This category means that your plan will be approved and your BCF funding will be made available to you subject to the following standard conditions which apply to all BCF plans:

- That you complete the agreed actions from the NCAR in the timescales agreed with NHS England;
- The Fund being used in accordance with your final approved plan and through a section 75 agreement;
- The full value of the element of the Fund linked to non-elective admissions reduction target will be paid over to CCGs at the start of the financial year. However, CCGs may only release the full value of this funding into the pool if the admissions reduction target is met as detailed in the BCF Technical Guidance<sup>1</sup>. If the target is not met, the CCG(s) may only release into the pool a part of that funding proportionate to the partial achievement of the target. Any part of this funding that is not released

into the pool due to the target not being met must be dealt with in accordance with NHS England requirements. Full details are set out in the BCF Technical Guidance.

The conditions are being imposed through NHS England's powers under sections 223G and 223GA of the NHS Act 2006 (as amended by the Care Act 2014). These allow NHS England to make payment of the BCF allocation subject to conditions. If the conditions are not complied with, NHS England is able to withhold or recover funding, or direct the CCG that it be spent in a particular way.

Appended to this letter is your NCAR Outcome Report which documents the agreed actions. Please work with your Area Team Lead Cameron Ward (cameron.ward@nhs.net) to agree a timetable for when you will submit the additional information/evidence required on the back of the NCAR report.

We are confident that there were no areas of high risk in your plan and as such you should progress with your plans for implementation. Although the areas of support the review identified are essential to successful delivery in the medium term we do not consider them as material at this stage.

Any ongoing support and oversight with your BCF plan will be led by NHS England Regional/Area Team along with your Local Government Regional peer rather than the BCF Taskforce from this point onwards.

#### Non-elective (general and acute) admissions reductions ambition

As there is a considerable amount of time between the submission of BCF plans and their implementation from April 2015, we recognise that some areas may want to revisit their ambitions for the level of reduction of non-elective admissions, in light of their experience of actual performance over the winter, and as they become more confident of the 2014/15 outturn, and firm-up their plans to inform the 2015/16 contracting round. Any such review should include appropriate involvement from local authorities and be approved by HWBs. NHS England will assess the extent to which any proposed change has been locally agreed in line with BCF requirements, as well as the risk to delivery of the ambition, as part of its assurance of CCGs' operational plans.

Once again, thank you for your work and we look forward to the next stage.

Yours sincerely,



**Dame Barbara Hakin**  
**National Director: Commissioning Operations**  
**NHS England**

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/bcf-technical-guidance-v2.pdf>