

24 March 2014

Dear colleague

Following David Bennett's letter regarding Monitor's approach to supporting FT performance against emergency care access standards dated 9 December 2013, I am writing to inform you of our intended approach for 2014/15.

Firstly, I would like to express our appreciation and thanks for the effort which you and your teams have put into meeting this standard for patients in 2013/14, after the very challenging winter of 2012/13. Notwithstanding the relatively mild weather, we know that neither attendances at emergency departments nor emergency admissions are significantly lower than last year, and it is credit to the hard work of staff across health and social care systems that despite that, we are on course to achieve the overall standard for 2013/14.

We intend to continue our existing process up to the week ending 6 April 2014, so that we are able to cover performance up to the end of Q4.

Following this, we intend to scale back the number of A&E support calls. However in response to feedback on those parts of the process trusts found most useful, and to ensure that we continue to support provider regulation teams and the national and regional tripartite arrangements in supporting improvements in A&E performance we intend to maintain the following processes over the summer:

1. The weekly data collection from trusts by 17:00 each Tuesday via the online portal will continue.
2. The weekly benchmarking reports based on the information submitted will continue to be distributed each Friday.
3. The central team will stand down after the week ending 6 April but relationship teams will continue to have access to trusts' performance data on a weekly basis.
4. The existing process of regular calls will cease when the central team stands down. However relationship teams may, at their discretion, contact trusts that experience significant deterioration in A&E performance. This will enable effective engagement with tripartite partners to ensure escalation and resolution of issues which may be outside the direct control of trusts.
5. Colleagues from Sector Development may contact trusts which have demonstrated sustained good performance or significant improvement to understand good practice which can be shared with the rest of the sector. We also welcome pro-active contact from trusts who wish to share positive practice.

6. The [AEimprovement@monitor.gov.uk](mailto:AEimprovement@monitor.gov.uk) inbox will continue to be monitored should trusts wish to request information on best practice or have queries on the benchmarking or data submission.

This process will be reviewed later in 2014/15 in line with the national SITREP reporting timetable, and regular targeted calls may be reinstated for Q3 and Q4 2014/15.

We would continue to encourage feedback regarding Monitor's approach to supporting improvement in performance against emergency care access standards and have attached as an appendix to this letter a summary of the responses to the survey sent to each of you February. If you have any further feedback to add please inform us **via the A&E team inbox**.

We are working in partnership with NHS England and the Trust Development Authority to agree a single guidance document on operational and resilience planning for 2014/15 to be published early in the new financial year. It is anticipated that this will include details of the approach to allocating additional resources which may be available to local systems in 2014/15, and the timetable for doing so.

Thank you again for your continued co-operation and commitment.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Helen Buckingham', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Helen Buckingham**  
Chief of Staff