

19 August 2010

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Dear colleagues

**Re: The NHS Number Programme**

The April NHS Operations Board discussed the NHS Number Programme, and determined that a technical assessment should determine the earliest practicable date for complete mandation of the NHS Number; that this date should drive inclusion in the standard contracts for NHS service providers and therefore contractual payments should become dependent on the use of the NHS Number; and that we should look again at how the NHS Number is used in conjunction with death certificates.

In July 2010, the Government issued the White Paper on the future of the NHS: Liberating the NHS. Several core principles of the White Paper underline the need for consistent use of the NHS Number - the only national unique patient identifier - in all patient encounters including Information and Money to follow the Patient, Inter-operability of information across NHS organisational boundaries and Transparency in Outcomes.

It is important that all relevant departments work with the NHS Number Programme to deliver these actions, ensuring that the levers, necessary to ensure organisations delivering NHS services use the NHS Number, are put in place. I would personally like to request your support with this work and thank you, in advance, for all your efforts.

Yours faithfully



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