



**North East and  
North Cumbria**

## **Assurance Statement**

### **Introduction**

The following assurance statement has been compiled by the NENC ICB in response to the Dame Marianne Griffiths report into the North East Ambulance Service.

### **Specific commissioning points raised within the Independent Report**

The following recommendations have been made within the Independent Report which are specific to the NENC ICB.

16. To endorse the proposal currently being put forward by the commissioners to change the commissioning framework moving forward to improve governance oversight arrangements

17. To develop a coherent medium term resource plan with ambulance service commissioners to secure safe and sustainable services

### **Assurance Statement**

The North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board fully accept the findings of the report written by Dame Marianne Griffiths and acknowledge her work in investigating the serious issues identified.

The issues raised precede the creation of the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and, as such, this report recognises the transition of responsibility to the ICB on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022. Prior to this date, Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group acted as a lead commissioner for ambulance/patient transport services on behalf of the NHS across the North East.

Following a number of quality concerns identified in 2022 as part of the whistleblowing process, the shadow ICB instigated a risk escalation meeting jointly with NHS England. The outcome of this was to place the Trust into a quality improvement process led jointly between NHS England and the then shadow ICB in which the CQC also attends. This arrangement continued as the ICB was formally constituted and is continuing as part of ongoing oversight. In addition, additional support has been provided to NEAS to strengthen its governance processes. We are assured that this has had a positive impact on the management of governance within the team and the ICB will continue to review this as part of the ongoing oversight meetings.

Since this time, the ICB has implemented new commissioning arrangements for the Ambulance Service within the ICBs Executive team.

Recognising there is a relatively new leadership team in place within NEAS, the ICB has secured well-led support through a 'buddying arrangement' from Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, a Trust rated 'Outstanding' by the CQC. The ICB also acknowledge the significant effort by the NEAS team to rectify the issues identified and is encouraged by the results of the most recent CQC inspection. We are confident such improvements will continue as part of the Trust's ongoing commitment to learn and improve.

We can confirm that additional funding was secured in 2023 for the North East Ambulance Service. £8.6M Additional Ambulance Capacity Fund provided by NHS England has been received. In addition, £18M has been included recurrently in the 2023/24 contract from the ICB.

This level of additional funding was agreed with NEAS within this year's planning round and is based on bringing the organisation much more in line with other ambulance services across England. The ICB is committed to ensuring all NHS providers including NEAS are adequately funded to provide safe and sustainable services and will work with NEAS to ensure this is the case as part of developing ICS medium term financial plans making the best use of the funding provided to the ICB by NHSE.

The North East Ambulance Services leadership team continue to work hard to address the serious findings detailed within the report. The ICB will continue to support them, alongside having oversight of their progress with the delivery of an improvement plan which has been created to address the recommendations in this report and the CQC Inspection findings.