Dear Dr Wollaston

**GIRFT and primary care**

At the evidence session on the legislative proposals in the Long Term Plan in April, I committed to writing to you about how the techniques from the Getting It Right First Time programme (GIRFT) may be extended into primary care settings.

As you are aware, GIRFT started in surgical specialties and ongoing work is seeing it applied to other medical specialities. With securing improvements in quality at its heart, it is one of a number of programmes that will have supported over £1bn of efficiencies from clinical service lines forecasted to be delivered by provider trusts in 2018-19 out of a total of £3.26bn of savings for providers overall. The GIRFT team has so far produced eight national reports with three more due this quarter. Twenty three further reports across secondary care surgical and medical specialties are planned and scheduled to be published by March 2021.

One of the reasons why the GIRFT programme has been so successful is its methodology. GIRFT uses the expertise of national clinical leaders to spread best practice. These leaders go into every acute provider offering the specific clinical service being targeted for improvement to establish best practice and understand how to improve ways of working by reducing unwarranted variation. This has helped to ensure that the best and most efficient ways of working are adopted across the whole system rather than just pockets of it.

In addition to GIRFT’s continued work in secondary care, we expect an expert clinical review of the GIRFT primary care pilot to be concluded in the coming weeks, complete with an evaluation of its effectiveness in primary care. The Royal College of General Practitioners and colleagues from across the NHS will contribute to the review and evaluation of this work. The findings of this process will be considered in the context of the wider primary care improvement programme that is being led by the Primary Care Network development programme, who lead on improvement in the primary care sector.

NHS England and NHS Improvement
One of the positive outcomes of NHS England and Improvement working together has been a bringing together of each organisation’s improvement functions into one approach. This new approach, which includes experts from NHS England’s RightCare programme as well as the GIRFT team, will consider the GIRFT approach as well as a number of other programmes and pilots to ensure the right integrated improvement approach for primary care is implemented. Regardless of the final approach agreed, we will work to ensure that learnings from the GIRFT pilot are taken into consideration for any improvement programmes in primary care going forwards.

It is worth noting that the Primary Care Network development programme has already commissioned RightCare to produce unwarranted variation data packs which will be published when the Primary Care Networks are launched.

I hope this letter has provided you with an insight into the work of the GIRFT team in primary care settings. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

Ian Dalton CBE

Chief Executive, NHS Improvement