

Independent auditor's report to the Directors of North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust

In our auditor's report issued on 22 June 2022, we explained that we could not formally conclude the audit and issue an audit certificate for the Trust for the year ended 31 March 2022, in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Code of Audit Practice, until we had:

- Completed our work on the Trust's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. We have now completed this work, and the results of our work are set out below.

Opinion on the financial statements

In our auditor's report for the year ended 31 March 2022 issued on 22 June 2022 we reported that, in our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Trust as at 31 March 2022 and of its expenditure and income for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Department of Health and Social Care Group accounting manual 2021 to 2022; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the National Health Service Act 2006.

No matters have come to our attention since that date that would have a material impact on the financial statements on which we gave this opinion.

Report on other legal and regulatory requirements - the Trust's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources

Matter on which we are required to report by exception – the Trust's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources

Under the Code of Audit Practice, we are required to report to you if, in our opinion, we have not been able to satisfy ourselves that the Trust has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2022.

We have nothing to report in respect of the above matter.

Responsibilities of the Accountable Officer

The Chief Executive, as Accountable Officer, is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of the Trust's resources.

Auditor's responsibilities for the review of the Trust's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources

We are required under Section 21(3)(c) and Schedule 13 paragraph 10(a) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 to be satisfied that the Trust has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. We are not required to consider, nor have we considered, whether all aspects of the Trust's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources are operating effectively.

We have undertaken our review in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice, having regard to the guidance issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General in December 2021. This guidance sets out the arrangements that fall within the scope of 'proper arrangements'. When reporting on these

arrangements, the Code of Audit Practice requires auditors to structure their commentary on arrangements under three specified reporting criteria:

- Financial sustainability: how the Trust plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services;
- Governance: how the Trust ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks; and
- Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness: how the Trust uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services.

We have documented our understanding of the arrangements the Trust has in place for each of these three specified reporting criteria, gathering sufficient evidence to support our risk assessment and commentary in our Auditor's Annual Report. In undertaking our work, we have considered whether there is evidence to suggest that there are significant weaknesses in arrangements.

Report on other legal and regulatory requirements – Audit certificate

We certify that we have completed the audit of North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust for the year ended 31 March 2022 in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Code of Audit Practice.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the Directors of the Trust, as a body, in accordance with Part 5 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Trust's Directors those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Trust and the Trust's Directors as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Laurelin Griffiths

Laurelin Griffiths, Key Audit Partner
for and on behalf of Grant Thornton UK LLP, Local Auditor

Birmingham

16 September 2022