



Office of the NHS Chief Executive
Skipton House
80 London Road
London SE1 6LH

Huw Yardley
Clerk, Health and Social Care Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

By email

13th December 2019

Dear Huw,

As you will recall in response to a question at the NHS Capital hearing on 22 October, we agreed to write to the Committee with additional information on vacant or void space. The usage of the NHS estate is continuously under review to ensure it can best support high quality clinical services. Trusts will sometimes seek to keep areas empty so that services can be moved temporarily to new locations without the need to close the service while this is done. Where areas become permanently empty, Trusts decide on appropriate action.

Data on empty space in NHS buildings is collected annually through the Estates Return Information Collection (ERIC) for all NHS trusts and sites. It is published at:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/estates-returns-information-collection>

Lord Carter's Productivity in NHS hospitals report recommended the NHS should aim to deliver "2.5% of unoccupied or under-used space by April 2017 and delivering this benchmark by April 2020". The NHS has now met this goal and has already delivered a figure of 2.14%. The progress to achieve this target is:

Financial Period	Total Occupied Floor Area (m ²) (Millions)	Vacant %	Increase / Reduction from Prior Year
2014/15	24.3m	4.37%	
2015/16	24.8m	2.44%	-43%
2016/17	25.2m	2.31%	-4%
2017/18	24.5m	2.21%	-7%
2018/19	24.6m	2.14%	-3%



The NHS Long Term Plan includes the reduction in the amount of non-clinical space by a further 5%, freeing up space for clinical or other activity.

In addition, the new Hospital Infrastructure Plan provides a major opportunity to improve the NHS estate. These improvements will provide opportunities to improve the efficient use of the estate.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Stevens', with a horizontal line underneath.

Simon Stevens
NHS Chief Executive