

To: Clinical commissioning groups:

- Medical directors
- Nursing directors

Trusts

- Medical directors
- Nursing directors

NHS England and NHS Improvement  
Skipton House  
80 London Road  
London  
SE1 6LH

**26 August 2021**

Dear Colleagues,

## **Patient Safety Specialist programme**

I wrote to you last year about the Patient Safety Specialist programme and to request that you identify one or more people in your organisation as your designated patient safety specialist(s). The National Patient Safety team also published a [requirements document](#), setting out the skills and experience these individuals would need, and what the role would entail.

I am pleased to inform you that over the past year more than 700 patient safety specialists have been identified in organisations across the NHS, providing valuable support and influencing local practice in response to a number of national issues and initiatives.

I am now asking for your support to ensure the continued success of the Patient Safety Specialist initiative. To perform their role effectively, patient safety specialists must develop a strong working relationship with their board so that the leadership of their organisation understands the role and the expectations of the board in supporting this important work.

Please can you arrange a dedicated board discussion within the next six months to work with your patient safety specialist(s) to reflect on the board's expectations and responsibilities in patient safety. It is also an opportunity to formally link your patient safety specialist(s) to your non-executive director with responsibility for patient safety.

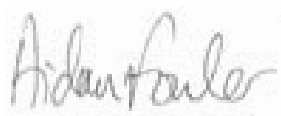
To support you to lead these discussions, we have produced the enclosed executive briefing document.

I appreciate that this is an extremely busy time for the NHS but it has never been more important to strengthen the focus on patient safety. Your organisation's full commitment

to your patient safety specialist(s) will help improve patient safety and support safer recovery planning from COVID-19. We will continue to provide guidance for the patient safety specialists on how they can support the implementation of the Patient Safety Strategy and COVID-19 recovery planning.

Thank you for your support with this role. The Patient Safety Specialist programme provides an opportunity to build local patient safety knowledge and improvement expertise, especially as patient safety networks develop at integrated care system (ICS), regional and national levels.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aidan Fowler". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name.

**Dr Aidan Fowler**

National Director of Patient Safety in England  
NHS England and NHS Improvement