

Independent auditor's report to the directors of Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust

Audit completion

In our auditor's report, issued on 27 June 2025, for Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust (the 'Trust') for the year ended 31 March 2025, we reported an unqualified opinion on the Trust's financial statements.

We explained that we could not formally conclude the audit and issue an audit certificate for the Trust for the year ended 31 March 2025, in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Code of Audit Practice, until we had completed the work necessary in relation to the Trust's consolidation schedules and received confirmation from the National Audit Office (NAO) that the audit of the NHS group consolidation is complete for the year ended 31 March 2025. This work is now complete and the NAO has confirmed the audit of the NHS group consolidation is complete for the year ended 31 March 2025.

We are therefore satisfied all audit work necessary has been completed.

Report on other legal and regulatory requirements - 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 2025.

In our auditor's report for the year ended 31 March 2025 issued on 27 June 2025, we reported that:

"we have nothing to report in respect of whether the Trust has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2025 except on 20 July 2021 we identified a significant weakness in how the Trust plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services for the year ended 31 March 2021. This was in relation to the development of cost improvement plans. We recommended that:

- *The Trust needs to prioritise the development of the revenue affordability plan.*

Subsequently, on 14 November 2023, we raised further recommendations that:

- *The Trust develop its recurrent CIP and vacancy hold programme.*
- *Financial, clinical and operational colleagues need to work together to identify and deliver transformation schemes, and work with system partners to identify wider opportunities to support financial goals.*

As part of our assessment of the Trust's arrangements for ensuring economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2025, we reviewed the Trust's progress against these recommendations. Unfortunately, we found that only limited progress has been made, and as a result, the significant weakness in arrangements remains."

No matters have come to our attention since that date that would have resulted in any additional exception reporting on the Trust's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Report on other legal and regulatory requirements – audit certificate

We certify that we have completed the audit of Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust for the year ended 31 March 2025 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Smith". The script is cursive and fluid.

Andrew Smith, Key Audit Partner

for and on behalf of Grant Thornton UK LLP, Local Auditor

Birmingham

5 January 2026