



Department
of Health

From the Lord Prior of Brampton
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for NHS Productivity (Lords)

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Consultation on the mandate to NHS England for 2016 to 2017

Thank you for your letter of 26 November 2015, attaching Healthwatch England's response to the consultation on the mandate to NHS England for 2016-17.

I am most grateful for Healthwatch England's advice and support in developing the new mandate to NHS England, both in the response attached to your letter, and through the constructive discussions with my officials throughout the development of the new mandate. This feedback has been taken into consideration in finalising the mandate, and it, along with other consultation responses, will be addressed as part of the Government's response to the consultation.

I appreciate your concerns on the length of the consultation period. In determining our approach to consultation, the Government took account of the Cabinet Office's consultation principles¹. Many Government consultations are around four weeks long. In this case, the timeframes reflected the circumstances surrounding this year's mandate – a General Election, the Government's spending review on 25 November and the need to give the NHS time to plan for 2016-17.

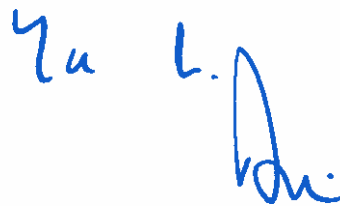
As you know, there is not a statutory requirement to consult the public on the mandate to NHS England. The statutory requirement is for the Secretary of State to consult with NHS England and Healthwatch

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principles-guidance>

England before specifying objectives and requirements in the mandate, and for the mandate to be laid before Parliament when published. We wanted to go further and publish our proposals for setting the mandate so that stakeholders and the public can feed in their views. The consultation was announced in a Written Ministerial Statement to Parliament on 29 October, published online, tweeted by the Department, briefed to the Health Service Journal and circulated through a number of the Department and NHS bulletins.

In previous years with longer consultation periods, the Department received 200-300 responses, mostly from organisations in the health sector. In fact, even with a shorter consultation period, this year we received over 130,000 responses. This unprecedented volume of responses provides a rich and valuable set of data about public views not only of the mandate, but also about the future direction of the NHS more widely, which we are carefully considering. We will publish the Government's response to the consultation alongside the mandate. This will include a summary of the responses received, and will outline the concerns raised, and the changes made to the mandate as a result.

My officials continue to work with Healthwatch England as we finalise the mandate for publication.



DAVID PRIOR