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healthwatch

Lord Prior of Brampton
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for NHS Productivity (Lords)
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London
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29 December 2015

Dear Lord Prior,

Following on from Anna's previous letter in November, I would like to express Healthwatch England's thanks to you and your team for responding so positively and comprehensively to our comments on the drafting of the Mandate for NHS England, both on the content and the process.

Firstly on complaints, it is encouraging to see the need to learn from complaints embedded in the Mandate and we would now expect NHS England to lead by example in using the 'My Expectations' framework to improve people's experiences of raising concerns when things go wrong. This is both important in practical terms and also underlines the Government's continued commitment to improvement of complaints handling across health and social care.

With regard to improving public and patient involvement in changes to local services, we note the references to greater engagement of communities in decision making processes about NHS services. Following our conversations with your officials to date, we look forward to exploring how assurance that this engagement is taking place can be incorporated into the CCG assessment framework which is currently being developed.

On the process of developing the Mandate, we recognise that there is no statutory requirement for the Government to carry out a public consultation but that you have continued to conduct this process in line with the Cabinet Office principles. The significant public appetite to engage in conversations about the future of the NHS is demonstrated by the 130,000 responses you received to this short consultation. We look forward to working with you next year on the refresh of the Mandate to explore new ways of capitalise on this appetite and to ensure both the public and patients have sufficient opportunity to feed in their thoughts on the priorities for the NHS.

Kind regards,

Jane Mordue
Interim Chair
Healthwatch England