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healthwatch

David Mowat MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Department of Health
Richmond House
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21 October 2016

Dear Minister,

As you will be aware, Healthwatch England is a statutory consultee on the Mandate to NHS England.

Building on our contribution to the development of the new Mandate last year, over the summer we have been having constructive conversations with both NHS England and Department of Health officials to feed in to the annual refresh process.

I wanted to take this opportunity to write to you and outline where we have got to in these discussions and formally set out how this year's deliverables could help continue to enhance the role patient experience and feedback plays in improving care and shaping the redesign of services.

Attached to this letter is an appendix providing further detail but broadly speaking there are three key opportunities that could usefully be explored through the refresh of the Mandate:

1) Improving public involvement in changes to local services:

Given the pace and scale of change across the NHS and social care sector, it is important that the Government takes every opportunity to underline its commitment to ensuring communities have their say in the future of their local services.

NHS England is already developing new indicators for how CCGs are involving and engaging people in local decisions. It also looks likely that these same indicators will be adopted for assuring the Sustainability and Transformation Plans.

Including a deliverable based on these new indicators in the NHS Mandate would help give public involvement the required level of importance.

2) Using discharge as a success indicator for integration:

We welcome the increased focus placed by the Department of Health and NHS England on addressing the problems around discharge processes. But focusing



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on discharge provides more opportunities than just reducing the number of delayed transfers of care.

Patient experience of leaving hospital, and the care and support they receive afterwards to help them recover, provides real insight into how well services are working together, how efficient the local system is and the extent to which it is patient centred.

The Mandate refresh could be used to set out an ambition to better measure patient experience of discharge as way of assessing progress against the integration of services.

3) Demonstrating how the NHS has learnt from feedback:

The Mandate outlines a desire to see the NHS become the world's largest learning organisation, including from feedback and complaints.

A key element of this is developing a culture where feedback is welcomed. One of the ways to do this is for the NHS to highlight not just how people can submit their comments and concerns but how this has led to changes in the way services are delivered.

The refresh presents an opportunity to set deliverables that specifically require NHS England, working with key partners including NHS Improvement, to show what the system as a whole has learnt from complaints and how this is being communicated to patients.

We appreciate the early involvement in this year's refresh process and would like to thank officials for taking on board our feedback and suggestions throughout the development of the Mandate deliverables for 2017/18.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Mordue
Interim Chair
Healthwatch England