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Councillor Peter Walker
Chair
Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee
Sunderland City Council
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15 MAR 2010

Dear Peter,

**REFERRAL BY SUNDERLAND CITY COUNCIL HEALTH AND WELLBEING
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – CHURCH VIEW MEDICAL PRACTICE INTEGRATED CARE
PILOT**

Thank you for your letter of 17 November 2009 formally referring proposals about the Church View Medical Practice integrated care pilot in Sunderland.

As you know, I asked the Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP) to undertake an initial assessment of the referral.

The Panel has now completed its initial assessment and shared its advice with me.

A copy of the Panel's advice is appended to this letter and will be published on their website on 15 March 2010 (www.irpanel.org.uk)

In order to make a decision on this matter, I have considered the concerns raised by your Committee and have taken into account the IRP's initial advice on the matter.

Grounds for referral by your Committee

In your letter of 17 November 2009, you essentially raised four concerns:

- in respect of the requirement to consult when an exemption is claimed by an NHS body for a pilot scheme under regulation 4(2)(b) there is currently no obligation to notify the local authority of the exercising of this exemption and this appears to be a gap in the regulations;
- the OSC are concerned that there needs to be a greater clarity around what constitutes a pilot scheme and the opportunity to provide comment on what a pilot scheme is about. In this instance, the pilot scheme is to run for three years and

involves the permanent features such as the transfer of staff, which effectively negates the opportunity to extend the pilot and so it becomes a fait accompli;

- the OSC consider that the proposal is in effect a substantial development or variation of health services in the OSC's area which links to the issue of what is or is not defined as a substantial development or variation in health services; and
- concerns surrounding the pilot.

Local reassurance

As the IRP points out in its advice, the Integrated Care Pilot Programme prospectus and accompanying evidence base document emphasise that integrated care *"can be an effective way of delivering health care, providing opportunities to break down barriers between primary and secondary care as well as health and social care"*.

The IRP agrees with this view and supports the pilot programme as an opportunity to test innovative models for service delivery aimed at improving the quality of patient care. The CVMP/CHS pilot has undergone a rigorous and detailed selection process within the Department of Health and has also been investigated and approved by the NHS Co-operation and Competition Panel. I concur with this.

Integration

Better integration has the potential to deliver some of the key objectives for improving health and care services, including better quality of care, greater personalisation, a shift towards health promotion and reduced inequalities.

The programme of Integrated Care Pilots provides an opportunity for pilots, their partners and the community more widely to use their 'on the ground' knowledge of local populations to design services that are flexible, personalised and seamless.

The current 16 pilots are all being evaluated against a set of criteria including impact on health outcomes, improved quality of care, service user satisfaction, and effective relationships and systems.

Better integration has grown in profile in recent times and the evaluation process will contribute to a robust, evidence base on the impact of evaluation.

I hope that your Committee can continue to support the pilot in its objectives of improving services for patients. The pilot has been making good progress on agreeing terms and the contract is scheduled to novate (finalising the new arrangements) on 1 April 2010.

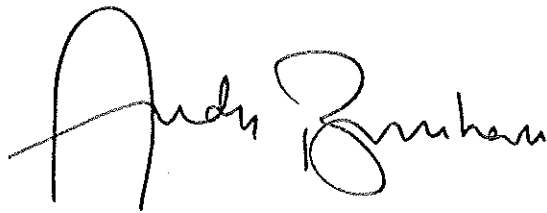
Conclusion

I am satisfied the IRP's advice is in the interests of the local health service and I hope that your Committee will continue to work with local NHS partners in the best interests of patients.

I am copying this letter to:

David Stout, Acting Chief Executive, NHS North East
Dr Peter Barrett, Chair, IRP
Chris Mullin MP

Yours sincerely,



ANDY BURNHAM