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**Councillor John Illingworth**

By email

10 December 2013

Dear Councillor Illingworth

When I declined your invitation to attend the 11 December meeting of the Yorkshire & Humber JHOSC, I promised instead to send a short written update. This is enclosed.

I have also just seen your letter of Monday 9 December sent at 6.17pm in which you restate the legal right of the JHOSC to hear from representatives of public bodies, and question whether NHS England has understood the IRP's conclusions in respect of the role of local government, and overview in particular. Since you plan to discuss this at your meeting on 11 December I thought I would send a quick response which I am happy to discuss with you in more detail in due course.

My decision not to attend on 11 December was not intended as a snub to the JHOSC. I think it is extremely helpful that there is an overview body representing the 15 top tier authorities in Yorkshire and Humber, and I found my last visit, in September, to be extremely helpful, as I hope you did too. I would be happy to attend your Committee in the future. The simple truth on this occasion is that I have had to make a judgement about trade-offs between competing priorities. I also have to be fair, and be seen to be fair, in acting on behalf of all patients in England. I know we disagree slightly about the implications of this, but I believe I have to listen to every stakeholder proportionately and avoid the perception (or reality) of being unduly influenced by any one constituency. This is a difficult balance to strike and it is quite possible I have misjudged it, in which case I apologise, but I make no apology for trying to mitigate the risk.

Our intention to hold a plenary event in Birmingham on 8 January – which I understand you are due to attend with Councillor Mulherin and Mr Courtney - is in part intended to resolve this problem by making sure that other local authorities and OSCs are as aware of the review and associated issues as Yorkshire & Humber's JHOSC. It is precisely because other OSCs have not demanded my attention in equal measure that I believe we have a responsibility

to raise the general level of awareness.

We do not have a firm agenda for the 8 January meeting yet, but our working plan is that the day should cover the following items in roughly this order/timing:

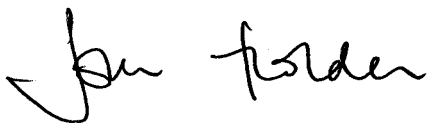
- 12.30 - 1pm gather/lunch, informal networking
- 1pm Welcome & Introductions
- Update on the new review - what has been done, what is in plan, what the timelines are and the plan of the year ahead.
- 1.45pm Summary of the outputs from clinical, provider and patient engagement groups, how we are responding to the “difficult issues”.
- 2.30 Opportunity for questions from the floor and identify any items of particular concern for attendees
- 3.15 wrap up and agreed next steps
- 3.30 close and depart

This is not a fixed agenda, we will be seeking views before the event and flexible on the day – I am quite sure for example that we will want to allow maximum time for Q&A and discussion. One of the topics I would like to discuss is the timing of local elections and the implications of purdah for any engagement or consultation that would otherwise take place – I think this is a clear risk to our review’s timetable and I would value the views of those attending the Birmingham event.

Finally, for the avoidance of doubt in your discussion at JHOSC, I wanted to emphasise that I have not been ignoring the interests of Leeds: I have been actively listening to views from those closely associated with the provision of congenital heart surgery at Leeds, although of course I accept this is not a substitute for also talking to the JHOSC. In recent weeks I have met representatives from the “Children’s Heart Surgery Fund” at our Patients’ Group, clinicians including Carin van Doorn (consultant surgeon) at our clinicians’ group, and I have met the new Trust chief executive Julian Hartley at our provider group.

I hope this explanation is helpful, though I do recognise you would prefer to be discussing the issues with me in person at your meeting.

Yours sincerely



John Holden  
**Director of System Policy**

## **Update for JHOSC – 11 December 2013**

Since I attended the JHOSC on 13 September, NHS England has continued the process of engagement with stakeholders and the development of the work required to ensure a standards-based, nationally consistent approach to commissioning congenital heart services. Amongst other things we have:

- clarified the role of the Clinical Reference Groups (CRGs), in developing service specifications ready for full public consultation in the spring. We have also addressed concerns about public patient involvement on the CRGs (applications will be invited for a further four members of this group)
- announced that Professor Pedro del Nido, Chief of Paediatric Cardiac Surgery at Boston Children's Hospital, USA, will provide an international perspective to the review's Clinical Advisory Panel
- published details of the proposal being developed by NHS England's analysts for refreshing the data which underpins our understanding of the services currently being provided, and which may be required in future – and we have published updates to the proposal in the light of comments received
- provided an update on our discussions with Healthwatch England about their engagement
- published the notes of my attendance at Yorkshire and Humber joint OSC
- attended a meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group (of MPs and peers) and published all the associated materials including our own note of proceedings
- published a transcript of our 18 July Board meeting (in addition to the video already online)
- published the minutes of our Board's Task and Finish Group of 30 September
- published the papers for our Programme Boards on 21 October and 13 November
- published weblinks to the answers to various Parliamentary questions
- confirmed the intended scope of our review (which was decided by the Board Task and Finish Group on 29 October after a recommendation from the Clinical Advisory Panel, which in turn considered over 40 submissions from various stakeholders following a 2 week period of engagement on the draft scope paper)
- attended the first meeting of three newly constituted engagement groups: the patient and public group, the clinicians group, and the provider group
- published a note of a meeting of the work to align the 3 current sets of standards relating to congenital heart services
- published papers from our main Board meeting on 8 November.