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London-wide coordination of mental health services

Dear Victoria,

Thank you for your letter of 20 December 2011 regarding the Health and Public Services Committee meeting's discussion around pan-London coordination and oversight of mental health services, particularly from April 2013. Subject to the passing of the Health and Social Care Bill, this is when Clinical Commissioning Groups will take up their commissioning responsibilities, once authorised to do so, and NHS London and Primary Care Trusts will have been abolished.

The issues the Committee raise are important ones being faced for many services and they are being carefully considered by the NHS and its partners. As you will know, there is still much to do in designing the new system. For example, the operating model for the NHS Commissioning Board and its sectors (of which London is one of four in England) is not yet finalised; emerging Clinical Commissioning Groups are considering how they will fulfil their roles; and how these will work together and with others, such as Public Health England and local authorities, is in development.

There are bodies already established that will continue to play important leadership roles across London such as the London Health Improvement Board and the three Academic Health Science Centres. These will continue to be vital parts of the system architecture.

At this stage, it is too early to say how all these and other parts of the new system will operate. However, in its design the issues raised by the Committee will need to be addressed and NHS London will seek to ensure they are.

I very much welcome the Health and Public Services Committee's interest in and input to the development of the new system, both with regards to mental health services and others. The London Assembly is a key partner to and foundation of the existing and new system and I look forward to continuing working with it as we move towards 2013/14.

Yours sincerely



Dame Ruth Carnall DBE
Chief Executive, NHS London

London Strategic Health Authority

Chair: Professor Mike Spyer

Chief Executive: Dame Ruth Carnall DBE