

*From the Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
Secretary of State for Health*



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Councillor John Illingworth
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12 JUN 2013

Dear Cllr Illingworth,

**“SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE REVIEW” OF CHILDREN’S
CONGENITAL HEART SERVICES – INDEPENDENT
RECONFIGURATION PANEL REPORT**

Further to your letter of 27 November 2012 in which you referred proposals regarding the Safe and Sustainable review of children’s heart surgery, I asked the Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP) for its advice on the matter.

At the same time, given the Panel had already commenced a full review of the proposals following referrals from Lincolnshire Council’s Health Scrutiny Committee and Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland’s Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, I asked the IRP whether your referral could be incorporated as part of that full review.

The Panel has now completed its full review and shared its report with me.

A copy of their report, including its fifteen recommendations is appended to this letter and will be published today on the Panel’s website at www.irpanel.org.uk

In order to make my decision on this important matter, I have considered in detail the IRP's report with regard to the specific concerns raised by your Committee.

It is clear the IRP has undertaken a very detailed review of all the evidence relating to this importance case. The IRP has considered a significant amount of material before formulating its final report, including that from the local NHS, your Committee and other groups with an interest in this case for change.

The report shows that the proposals of the Safe & Sustainable review clearly cannot go ahead in their current form. NHS England now needs to move forward on the basis of the IRP's recommendations, and the judgement of the court in the 'Safe and Sustainable' case - I understand that NHSE are withdrawing their appeal.

The challenge for NHS England is to determine how to take this forward as quickly and effectively as possible. It will be working with all interested parties to ensure that real progress is made as quickly as possible, always focused on the best outcomes for patients. I have asked NHS England to report back to me by the end of July on how they intend to proceed.

I am sure you will join me in thanking the Panel for all their hard work.

Yours sincerely

Jeremy

JEREMY HUNT