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Steven Courtney
Principal Scrutiny Adviser
Leeds City Council
By email

2 April 2014

Dear Steven

Thank you for your email of 26 March inviting the new CHD review team to send a representative to the JHOSC meeting on 10 April.

As I explained when we spoke by phone yesterday, I am afraid the scheduling of your meeting is almost impossible for us. I am on leave that week. Other members of the team are involved in an intensive programme of engagement events for children and young people, travelling around the country to canvass the views of those who use paediatric congenital heart services, and there is an event in Bristol on the same date. Therefore I regret we cannot attend on 10 April.

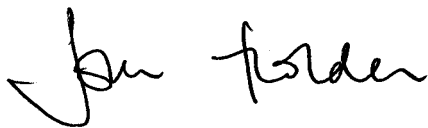
However, I am happy to enclose a written update, as requested, highlighting some of the progress since I last sent an update to the JHOSC in December.

In my letter to you dated 27 February, I acknowledged that it is of course for the JHOSC to determine its own work programme. However I also suggested that as "...we are not developing major service change proposals, and the current focus is on the standards and service specification, there may be scope to revisit your plans for scrutiny input. [T]his could mean that it is more appropriate to have two meetings: first, a meeting at the beginning of the consultation to shape the committee's response to the consultation, and then a further meeting in the autumn to consider the final specification post-consultation and the emerging approach to form, function, commissioning and change".

I think this advice still stands – we are aiming to consult over the summer, probably starting in July, in which case our 12 weeks consultation would complete in the autumn and we would expect to have a finalised specification by winter. So, the ideal time for the next discussion at JHOSC might be nearer the start of consultation (perhaps early July?). I realise that between now and then you have local government elections and this could make it difficult for you to establish a settled timetable. When we spoke yesterday you said you would reflect on this, and consider whether any alternative approaches could work for you.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Holden', with a stylized, cursive script.

John Holden
Director of System Policy

Update for JHOSC – 10 April 2014

Since my last written update to JHOSC dated 11 December 2013, NHS England has continued the process of engagement with stakeholders and the development of work to ensure a standards-based, nationally consistent approach to commissioning congenital heart services.

There are six objectives to the review and we are progressing all of these. The six objectives are:

- To develop standards to give improved outcomes, minimal variation and improved patient experience.
- To analyse demand for specialist inpatient CHD care, now and in the future.
- To make recommendations on function, form and capacity of services needed to meet that demand and meet quality standards, taking account of accessibility and health impact.
- To make recommendations on the commissioning and change management approach including an assessment of workforce and training needs.
- To establish a system for the provision of information about the performance of CHD services to inform the commissioning of these services and patient choice.
- To improve antenatal and neonatal detection rates

We try to ensure that the governance of our work is transparent, and we have been engaging extensively with those who use the service and those who provide it. Amongst other things we have:

- Held a meeting of our Board's Task and Finish Group, on 7 January
- Held a meeting on 8 January to which we invited all those Local Authorities who host a congenital heart surgery unit, and representatives from local and national Healthwatch
- Held a meeting of our Programme Board on 14 January
- Held a meeting of our Provider group on 15 January
- Provided an update to the main board of England for its meeting on 24 January
- Held a meeting of our Clinicians' group on 30 January
- Held a meeting of our Public and Patients' group on 10 February
- Held a meeting of our Programme Board on 11 February
- Attended a conference of the Royal College of Nursing 26 February
- Held a meeting of our Programme Board on 11 March
- Held a meeting of our Provider Group on 18 March
- Held a meeting of our Public and Patients group on 27 March

The various engagement and advisory groups have been discussing a range of issues, including

- The commissioning of data and literature reviews, and early findings from the data review (16% increase in children's CHD procedures over 10 years)
- The development of standards including "knotty issues" where opinion is divided
- The timetable to consultation on standards and afterwards to implement a new service specification
- The handling of quality/safety issues raised during the progress of the review
- Opportunities for provider engagement in shaping future provision
- Better, earlier diagnosis, including ante-natal testing and neonatal screening.

At the time of writing this (2 April), I am due to attend a meeting of the National Association of Critical Care managers on 4 April, and our Clinicians Group is due to meet again on 7 April. I also expect to have published in my next blog (7 April) some preliminary and un-validated findings from the literature review.

More information - about all of our work, including these meetings (agendas, papers, minutes etc) is freely available via my regular blog:
<http://www.england.nhs.uk/category/publications/blogs/john-holden/>