

Councillor Lisa Mulherin

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Your ref	
Our ref	LM/SMC
Date	21 May 2012

Dear Sir Neil,

Re: Review of Children's Congenital Cardiac Services

Further to your letter, dated 1 May 2012, I note with some concern that the JCPCT does not intend to respond to the report and recommendations presented by the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Yorkshire and the Humber).

You will no doubt be aware that the current health scrutiny regulations (SI 2002/2048, section 3 (3)) state:

'Where an overview and scrutiny committee requests a response from a local NHS body to whom it has made a report or recommendation, that body shall respond in writing to the committee within 28 days of the request.'

I am advised that the requirements of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 do not affect the requirement for NHS bodies to respond to scrutiny reports or recommendations. As such, given that the JCPCT has been in receipt of the report produced by the Joint HOSC since October 2011, I would urge the JCPCT to meet its obligations in this regard and provide an appropriate response without any further procrastination.

I would remind you that, on behalf of 5.5 million people across Yorkshire and the Humber, the 15 top tier local authorities of the Yorkshire and Humber region have worked extremely hard to produce a detailed report that considered the review, its proposals and specific implications for Yorkshire and the Humber. As such, in addition to the formal response requested, **I am also seeking further assurance that the scrutiny report and recommendations have been given, and will continue to be given, thorough consideration by the JCPCT ahead of its decision scheduled for 4 July 2012.**

I note with some considerable concern the recent publication of a document about services for Adults with Congenital Heart Disease (ACHD). This indicates that public consultation on the options for how ACHD services might be organised in the future will take place during the Summer/ Autumn 2013 – over a year after the JCPCT's planned decision-making meeting for Children's Congenital Cardiac Services on 4 July 2012.

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You will be aware that the Joint HOSC gave specific consideration to some of the issues associated with the review of ACHD services and highlighted these within its report. Some of the specific points highlighted in the Joint HOSC's report are summarised below:

- In Leeds the same surgeons treat both children and adults with congenital heart disease on the same site and there is continuity of care for patients from childhood through into adulthood. With three surgeons in post, in 2010 there were 392 surgical procedures (adults and children combined) undertaken at the current surgical centre in Leeds.
- By considering the number of paediatric and adult cardiac surgical procedures in totality, a completely different landscape is provided that significantly affects the number of surgical centres required across the country. Enough to justify retaining another two centres if the suggested minimum number of 400 surgical procedures is applied.
- The number of adults requiring cardiac surgery is likely to rise significantly over the coming years and, at some point in the future, may rise higher than the number of surgical procedures undertaken on children.
- A firm belief that the consideration of children's and adult's congenital cardiac services as two separate reviews represented too simplistic an approach and an artificial separation of existing clinical practice. By considering ACHD services separately, the outcome from the review of children's congenital cardiac services will almost certainly pre-determine the outcome of the ACHD review.
- Similar unaddressed concerns around the exclusion of the number of adult procedures have been raised by some professional bodies, in terms of absolute patient numbers and pre-determination.

As such, I would remind you that the Joint HOSC recommended that:

Adult cardiac services and the overall number of congenital cardiac surgical procedures carried out should be considered within the scope of this review and used to help determine the future configuration of surgical centres. As a minimum there should be a moratorium on any decision to designate children's cardiac surgical centres until the review of the adult congenital cardiac services is completed and the two can be considered together. (Recommendation 5)

I believe the JCPCT is taking an unacceptable stance by not responding to the Joint HOSC's report and recommendations until after its meeting on 4 July 2012 – an approach that seems to pay little regard to the following comments from the Secretary of State for Health, detailed in his letter dated 23 February 2012:

I expect the JCPCT to continue to engage with your Committee about the potential impact of these changes, not least in order to ensure that any further concerns the Committee may have can be considered.

I cannot over-emphasise my frustration and disappointment over the JCPCT's general position towards the Joint HOSC – which I feel has done little to establish and maintain an effective working relationship between the two bodies.

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Notwithstanding the points highlighted above, following the recent announcement that over the next few weeks a range of stakeholders will be asked to nominate representatives to attend the JCPCT meeting on 4 July 2012, I trust the Joint HOSC forms part of the range of stakeholders referred to. As such, I would request that a number of places are reserved for representatives from the Joint HOSC and appropriate support staff to attend.

I look forward to hearing from you in the very near future.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Lisa Mulherin
Chair, Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC), Yorkshire and the Humber

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- cc All Members of the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Yorkshire and the Humber)
Jeremy Glyde, Safe and Sustainable Programme Director (NHS Specialised Services)
Andy Buck, Chief Executive (NHS South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw)
Cathy Edwards, Director of Specialised Commissioning, North of England Specialised Commissioning Group (Yorkshire and the Humber Office)
Ms Maggie Boyle, Chief Executive (Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust)
Cllr. John Illingworth, Leeds City Council
Yorkshire and Humber Council Leaders
Yorkshire and Humber Members of Parliament