

Specialised Commissioning
London Region
Mezzanine Floor
Southside
105 Victoria Street London
SW1E 6QT

5 August 2016

Cllr Terry King, Leader
Cllr Richard Clifton, Health and Social Care Portfolio Holder
Rutland County Council
Catmose
Oakham
Rutland LE15 6HP

Dear Cllr King and Cllr Clifton

Proposal to cease commissioning CHD services at University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust

Thank you for your letter of 22 July 2016. I welcome the opportunity to clarify the position in relation to NHS England's proposals on congenital heart disease services.

The first thing to say is that no final decisions have been taken about the future of University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust or any of the other congenital heart diseases services in England. NHS England has set out proposals, based on the findings of the recent assessment exercise. Whether or not these proposals are taken forward will be subject to further stakeholder engagement, as well as the outcome of public consultation, which will begin later this year.

I recognise the strength of feeling of the County Council in relation to these proposals and their potential consequences. We are currently in the pre-consultation engagement stage, and we wish to discuss with yourselves and other stakeholders your concerns and questions, and the approach to consultation.

NHS England published its new standards for CHD services in July 2015. These standards – almost 200 of them – were collaboratively developed over a two-year period, by patients and their families/carers; clinicians; commissioners, and other experts. They were the subject of extensive public consultation, and all the views put forward were considered before the standards were finalised.

Information regarding consultation about our proposals will be communicated as widely as possible, well in advance of consultation starting. NHS England will make sure that the consultation takes account of those services which could be impacted by changes to CHD services, including wider paediatric services.

You raise in your letter questions about the relationship between our proposals on congenital heart disease services and the development and finalisation of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP).

The services which will be the subject of consultation are nationally designated as specialised services, and therefore commissioned by NHS England. The congenital heart disease review, including the development of and consultation on standards, has been carried out as a national programme. The changes being proposed therefore fall outside the scope of local STPs. However, I can confirm that our thinking about CHD services is informed by and takes account of the wider strategic picture in the area.

You also ask for a commitment in relation to 4 points:

- I can confirm that NHS England will attend a suitable meeting of the Rutland Health and Wellbeing Board
- I can confirm that no final decisions on changes to commissioning of CHD services will be taken until after the end of public consultation
- I can confirm that NHS England will keep its proposals under review throughout pre-consultation engagement and public consultation, including discussions with the Rutland Health and Wellbeing Board
- I can confirm that NHS England will undertake full public consultation on the proposals before they are implemented.

NHS England, through our regional specialised commissioning team and the national congenital heart disease programme team, will follow up on your letter to discuss the detail of engagement with the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Will Huxter', written in a cursive style.

Will Huxter
Regional Director of Specialised Commissioning (London)
SRO, Congenital Heart Disease Programme