

1st Floor
Wesleyan
Colmore Circus
Birmingham B4 6AR

Telephone: 0121 203 3333
Email: david.melbourne@nhs.net

29th December 2022

Sent via email to:

Andy Cave, CEO and Richard Burden, Chair
Healthwatch

Dear Andy and Richard

Thank you for the letter that I received on the 21st December regarding the request for four ground rules for the reviews that we are organising across University Hospitals Birmingham.

Apologies for the delay in response but I hope that you will understand that I, with many of the senior leaders in the health and care system, have been focussing on ensuring access to care during a period of unprecedented demand as we experience increased respiratory viruses in the population whilst preparing for industrial action and two bank holidays over Christmas and the New Year.

I had hoped that Healthwatch were clear on the intent of the NHS to ensure that we are transparent and open in respect of these reviews, I think it is worth reviewing the recent activity on this issue:

- Richard, I spoke to you on the 17th and explained our approach to the reviews. I understand that we have already been in touch to ensure that Professor Mike Bewick (the independent clinician who will lead the initial review) speaks to both you and Preet Gill MP as he starts the review so he understands your concerns and you can share the evidence that you have and will help shape his thoughts.
- At our Board Workshop on Monday the 12th attended by our Independent non-executives as well as partner members, for which there is an open invite to Andy as Healthwatch Chief Executive, we discussed the approach to the review and there was opportunity for challenge and debate.
- At the Integrated Care Partnership meeting on the 14th December – chaired by Councillor Grinsell and attended by Richard as well as a range of partners, I set out the approach to the review and confirmed that our approach would meet the requirements set out by Richard at the end of that item.
- On the 16th December I had a constructive conversation with Preet Gill, I listened to her concerns and we agreed that she would chair a external reference group. I have offered her my Chief of Staff to provide support to establish the group and I understand they have been in contact to take that forward. I stressed that Healthwatch be part of that group.
- Yesterday, Councillor Ian Ward had convened a meeting of local MPs with Dame Yve Buckland, Interim Chair at UHB, Jonathan Brotherton, Interim Chief Executive and myself in which I briefed those in attendance on our approach.

- As you will be aware there is a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 19th January where we have been asked to attend to discuss the issues raised regarding University Hospitals Birmingham.

As Chief Executive of NHS Birmingham and Solihull I need to ensure that we can continue to operate effectively during what is an incredibly challenging winter period whilst also ensuring that necessary improvements are being made, where required, in the system. I hope that you will appreciate the need for a careful balance and would ask for some understanding when we have many staff at all levels across the health and care system working long hours to ensure we can continue to tackle the challenges in our emergency and urgent care pathways whilst ensuring we drive down long elective waits and cancer waits (where we are making progress).

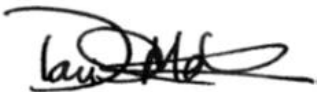
I am happy to meet again to confirm the points I have already made regarding the next steps around these reviews. Please let me know if either of you would like to do this, albeit I suspect this will have to be early in the New Year.

I have copied this letter into Councillor Ian Ward (Leader of BCC), Councillor Mariam Khan (Chair of the Birmingham Health & Well Being Board) and Councillor Karen Grinsell (Chair of Solihull Health & Wellbeing Board) and Fiona Botrill at the BCC so this can be included in the papers for the 19th January 2023. I have also ensured that Dame Yve Buckland and Jonathan Brotherton have copies as I understand that you have written to them under separate cover.

In the meantime can I wish you a Happy New Year.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely



David Melbourne
Chief Executive Officer
NHS Birmingham and Solihull

c.c. Cllr Ian Ward, Leader Birmingham City Council
Cllr Mariam Khan, Chair, Birmingham Health & Wellbeing Board
Cllr Karen Grinsell, Chair, Solihull Health & Wellbeing Board
Fiona Botrill, Senior Overview and Scrutiny Manager, Birmingham City Council