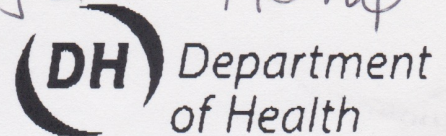


File CHC Campaign - Home

From the Office of the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Health)
Hazel Blears MP



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Alan Hartley
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18 SEP 2001

Dear Alan,

Thank you for coming in to discuss our proposals for the new arrangements to support patient and public involvement prior to the publication of our discussion document. I am confident that we can build on our meeting and ensure we maintain good communications over the next few months.

As I said, we are keen to involve CHCs and draw on their experience to develop the detail of the new arrangements. I am making arrangements to attend as many of the forthcoming regional events as possible to hear for myself what CHCs and others have to say.

It is early days in terms of the Bill, but I think we are all agreed that change of some description is inevitable. That said, it is in the interests of staff, members and most of all patients to have robust plans in place to ensure a smooth transition. However we would consider carefully the date that any of the new provisions came into force and would ensure that CHCs are not abolished before the new structures requiring legislation were set up.

We have always been committed to retaining the skills and experience of staff and members within the NHS. Officials will be working with the Society of CHC Staff and the unions to develop ways of supporting the staff of ACHCEW and individual CHCs to seek new job opportunities within the overall policy framework of Shifting the Balance of Power. I hope to attend the Society conference in November to launch this CHC HR package.



In the meantime, I am aware of a number of CHCs that are already exploring the possibility of forming "shadow" Patients' Forums in consultation with their local trusts. This is very encouraging. We are happy to support and facilitate this type of innovation as it is a way to test the practical effects of our new proposals, which will be a key facet of any transitional arrangements.

Thank you again, for what I felt was a constructive and positive meeting.

Yours ever.

Hazel

HAZEL BLEARS

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All CHCs

Vice Chair
Vice Chair
Director
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