

4 October 2002

Dear Colleagues

TRANSITION UPDATE

Here is the latest news from the TAB meeting of 3rd October.

TIMETABLE/ABOLITION DATE

The DoH said they were unable to provide any further information on the timetable for abolition of CHCs and ACHCEW, and neither were they able to give any indication as to when a decision on these matters can be expected, as they are tied up with decisions about CHC staff and the new Commission.

On the question of a region by region approach or a single national date for abolition, the Department said they were re-considering the region by region approach indicated in Sarah Mullally's letter to StHAs. The TAB confirmed that its advice is for a single, national date at the point when PCT Patient Forums are established.

STAFFING/RESOURCE ISSUES

Negotiations were continuing between the Department and the trade union representatives over how CHC staff will be dealt with. It was pointed out that on human resource issues effecting CHCs (as opposed to strictly 'industrial relations' issues), ACHCEW would need to be involved to represent CHCs as a whole.

The Department played down the significance of Sarah Mullally's statement that "over 600" staff would be working with Patients' Forums. It was stressed that the final figure depended on the final financial allocation from the Department's overall funds, and the views of the new Commission. However, the Department admitted that it's bid to the treasury in July 2002 for the Information Technology support for the Commission, including staff working with Patients' Forums, was based on "700 staff working from 28 local offices". ACHCEW tabled the attached discussion paper on staffing requirements for Patients' Forums, which suggests that around 1600 staff would be required to make the new system 'fit for purpose' and over 1100 for a 'basic/functional' system.

ACHCEW's Standing Committee is meeting on Monday 7th October to review our strategy. I will write again after that.

Best wishes

Peter Walsh
Director

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4 October 2002

Dear Jane

Alan asked me to thank you for your letter of 17th September and reply on his behalf. Sorry for the delay.

It is not clear when ACHCEW will actually be abolished. If there were any funds left at the point when the abolition takes place, then naturally our preference would be for the funds to be allocated equally to all CHCs (and if CHCs in England are abolished at the same time as ACHCEW, to Welsh CHCs). However, the relevant clause in the NHS Reform Act makes it clear that any remaining assets revert to the Secretary of State. It will be his decision as to what to do with them. We will, however, express our preferences to him.

As I explained when we spoke, the Act also requires the Secretary of State to consult the National Assembly for Wales. (I attach a copy of the relevant section of the Act for easy reference). It would be a good idea to ask the Assembly to make the same suggestions and to check on whether they are being consulted.

With best wishes

Peter Walsh
Director

Enc

cc Alan Hartley, Chairman, ACHCEW
Mr Graham Girvan, Treasurer, ACHCEW
Mr T Morgan, Chairman, AWCHC