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17 September 2013

Dr Howard Stoate
Chair
NHS Bexley Clinical Commissioning Group

Dear Howard

Re Integrated Performance Report at Month 2

Thank you for letter of 26 July (received on the 5th August). Whilst I was disappointed to receive your letter much of the content was consistent with the discussion we had with Sarah, Sarah and Theresa when Jeremy, Christian and I met with them on 19 July.

July was the first month of the new format integrated report. It is a standard report that we are delivering to all CCGs we work with and was developed with considerable input from our customers. The initial prototype was shared with your team back in February and the CCG has been sighted on its development since then. South London CSU is one of the first to provide its customers with such a report and we have received positive feedback from the majority of CCGs.

That said I do recognise that if the report fails to provide the CCG with the information and intelligence you need or fails to provide you with assurance that the contracts are being well managed then we clearly have more work to do.

We have already taken on board feedback from Bexley and other CCGs in respect to Month 2 and I am confident that there are step change improvements for the Month 3 report. In particular we will be focussing on significantly increasing the level of value adding intelligence provided and actions being taken on behalf of the CCG to manage the position.

I am also confident that the qualitative changes we have already made in respect to the monthly Finance Meeting where the numbers and forecasts for the Month 3 Integrated Performance Report were agreed are a significant step forward. The changes in our approach were very much a response to constructive feedback from the CCG.

Whilst we accept there is a need for further and continuous improvements to ensure the report provides value to CCGs I would like to take the opportunity to provide a specific response to your comments around robustness of information, inaccuracies and inconsistencies in Month 2.

The information that is used to generate commissioner monthly acute monitoring reports is based upon the information submitted by acute providers through SLAM and SUS reports submitted according to a national timetable.

The information that has been provided by acute providers across London at Month 2 has a number of deficiencies in regard to quality. It is not unusual for there to be issues in provider reporting in the early months of the year. A number of contract values have only just been agreed and other Trusts are still in the process of setting up their reports. Providers also seek to reflect in their reports changes to PbR rules for the new financial year. The tight turnaround for provision of information set out by the national timetable precludes significant rectifications being put in place in month.

A further significant complication for providers in 2013/14 has been the attribution of historic PCT activity between CCGs and NHS England. There is evidence that all providers to some extent are misattributing NHS England activity against CCG contracts. Unfortunately neither the CSU or CCGs are sighted on activity reported against NHS England held contracts. As such it is not possible to accurately determine the true levels of contract performance at pace. The reconciliation exercise with NHS England due at Month 6 will help to address this.

We recognise that this introduces an unwelcome level of risk to financial reporting and we are making considerable progress in assessing the impact of NHS England activity misattribution and potential changes in recording practice by providers in 2013/14 and you will see evidence of this in the Month 3 report. We can though only make an informed risk adjusted assessment which will be reviewed and agreed with CCG officers.

In relation to the assurances you are seeking for the Month 3 report:

Timely publication - There is a common timetable in place across South London for publication of the report and so far the CSU has met the deadlines.

Inaccuracies and quality assurance - A greater period of time was built into the production timetable for Month 3 to allow for a quality review to identify any inaccuracies and inconsistencies. Finance numbers have already been reviewed and agreed by Theresa.

Intelligence - Adjustments to the year to date reported position and forecast have already been agreed with Theresa and will be explicit in the report. Key performance drivers will be identified along with mitigating or remedial actions that are or could be taken.

Challenges and queries - The details of challenges are already included within the report and a risk assessed view is built into the year-to-date positions which have been agreed.

Areas for further investigation where queries have been raised by the CSU (including those that appear to relate to counting and coding) will be highlighted and where possible the value assessed. Due to the uncertainty around achievement of further savings no adjustment will be made to the reported positions except where agreed with the CCG.

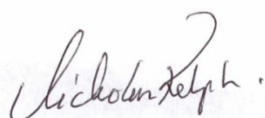
4. Finalisation of contract plan - Agreement of outstanding 2013/14 contract plans is an on-going process. The contract with Dartford and Gravesham is the most significant remaining outstanding. Bexley CCG is closely engaged with the CSU in bringing this to a satisfactory resolution. The CSU holds a weekly meeting with Sarah Valentine to review progress and actions in concluding all other outstanding contracts. An update is included within the Month 3 report.

I do hope this letter answers some of your concerns. We are of course very happy to attend your next Governing Body meeting or EMC to present the Month 3 report as we currently routinely do for other CCGs. Please let me know if you think this would be of value? I am happy to attend any meetings that you might consider would be helpful.

We have arranged a Bexley CCG/SLCSU executive-to-executive meeting so that we ensure we are fully aware of any residual issues you may have.

We are keen to get the Integrated Performance Report right and deliver the quality of product that you would expect to receive.

Yours sincerely



Nicholas Relph
Managing Director