

From the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Ivan Lewis MP



Your Ref: jrh/com 10b

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Dear Mr White

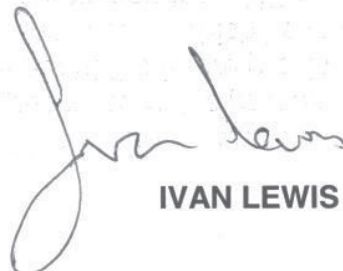
Thank you for your letter of 3 May to Patricia Hewitt about NHS service reconfiguration in Wiltshire. I am replying as the Minister responsible for the South West Region.

I was pleased to hear that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) and the local NHS have reached an agreement on the proposals for change and that people in Wiltshire now have clarity about the future provision of local services. It is also encouraging that you feel that issues which have previously been of concern to the OSC, such as joint working between the NHS and social care, are now being overcome with a long-term aim of re-establishing joint working and commissioning practices.

Service change will always engender strong views and that is why it is important that NHS bodies take seriously their responsibilities to engage with the OSC, patients and the public as set out in Sections 7 and 11 of the Health and Social Care Act 2001. This engagement should be a continuous process to allow key stakeholders to influence local planning and decision-making.

All NHS organisations must continue to look at the ways they provide services to ensure they are delivering the best possible value for money. We recognise that this may require NHS organisations to make tough decisions to ensure that funding is being used in the best possible way.

I hope this reply is helpful.



IVAN LEWIS