

*From the Office of Sir David Nicholson KCB CBE
Chief Executive of the NHS in England*



*Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2NS
david.nicholson@dh.gsi.gov.uk*

To: All NHS CEs
Monitor
Independent Reconfiguration Panel

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Gateway reference number: 14335

Dear Colleague

Service Reconfiguration

We share a commitment to improve health and healthcare. This is our driving principle, the focus through our QIPP work on facing the new financial realities and strongly endorsed by the Secretary of State with his commitment to world class outcomes. Where this requires change in the configuration of services we need to lead those processes to build confidence within the service and with the patients and communities we serve.

I am writing to let you know how we intend to take forward the Secretary of State's policy commitments on service reconfiguration. This will have an immediate impact on those of you currently undertaking consultation on service reconfiguration, and contains important information about how the system will change for any future reconfiguration plans.

The Secretary of State has identified four key areas in which reconfiguration processes need to improve as plans for significant service change are developed and consulted upon.

1. support from GP commissioners will be essential;
2. arrangements for public and patient engagement, including local authorities should be further strengthened;
3. there should be greater clarity about the clinical evidence base underpinning proposals;
4. that proposals should take into account the need to develop and support patient choice.

Future reconfiguration proposals will be expected to meet clear standards in each of these areas, which I intend to set out in further detail during June. They will be incorporated in the terms of reference of the Independent Reconfiguration Panel to inform their consideration of schemes referred to them by SofS, following formal referrals by local Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

PCTs and other NHS bodies with current reconfiguration proposals will be asked to revisit their processes to date to ensure they meet these new requirements. This applies to all future reconfigurations and those that are ongoing. I expect that in many cases this will require further work to be done locally and, in consultation with the IRP, assure the Department that these standards are now being applied.

Clearly the detail of these new standards will be important, but I thought I should write to you with these clear signals so that you can begin to think about how you should respond.

Given the complexity and scale of the change issues in London, I have asked NHS London to make separate recommendations about how service change in the capital should be taken forward to meet these requirements.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Nicholson', written over a thin red horizontal line.

Sir David Nicholson KCB CBE
NHS Chief Executive