



Ian Buckmaster
Manager of Committee at
Overview & Scrutiny Support

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TEAM

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TO:

Healthcare for London
Freepost Consulting the Capital

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Date: 05 March 2008

Your Reference:

Our Reference: **AC**

Dear Sir/Madam

**Response of Havering Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to
Healthcare for London – Consulting the Capital Consultation**

I am writing on behalf of the Havering Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee in order to give the Committee's formal response to the above consultation. This response has also been copied to the Chairman and Clerk of the Pan-London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee as it is that Committee which is the statutory consultee in this instance. Copies have also been sent to the Chief Executive and Head of Communications at Havering Primary Care Trust (PCT).

The response of the Havering Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to the Healthcare for London – Consulting the Capital consultation is as follows:

1. Staff Recruitment and Retention - It is the view of the Committee that many of the proposals out forward in the consultation document will require a considerable increase in the numbers of medical staff of all kinds and levels. Health organisations in North East London are already experiencing difficulties in both recruiting and retaining suitable staff. Whilst current human resources difficulties are being addressed by individual Trusts, the Committee is concerned that the Healthcare for London proposals, even if they may have merit in themselves, are likely to fail due to a lack of suitably qualified staff to implement them.

2. Agency Staff – It is the view of the Committee that the higher numbers of staff required under many of the proposals will inevitably result, at least in the short term, in a greater reliance by the NHS on the use of agency staff. The Committee feels that the use of agency staff has exacerbated the financial

problems encountered by certain local Health Trusts and that any such expenditure as a result of the Healthcare for London proposals must be carefully monitored and controlled.

3. Health Inequalities – The Committee supports the aim of Healthcare for London to reduce Health Inequalities but is not convinced that the proposals will actually achieve this. There are pockets of considerable deprivation within Havering and the Committee feels it is vital that health services for these poorest members of society are improved. The Committee wishes to see more detailed proposals for the how the Healthcare for London plans will address this area.

4. Role of Carers – The Committee is disappointed that there is little focus on the role of carers within the consultation document. Within Havering alone, according to the census of 2000, there are in excess of 28,000 unpaid carers. The Committee is concerned that the emphasis on having more services available in the community and/or at home will simply increase the workload on carers and wishes to see a specific carers' strategy incorporated within any Healthcare for London proposals.

5. Future Role of PCTs – The consultation document does not appear to consider the structure of London PCTs. The Committee has formed a view during its work that there are far too many PCTs in London, creating an excess of bureaucracy, and feels that any proposed restructuring of health services in London should also consider the issue of what is the appropriate number of PCTs for the London area.

6. Effect of Demographic Changes – Havering, in common with the rest of the North East London and Thames Gateway areas, is experiencing an increase in population that is likely to continue in the coming years. The Committee is concerned that these changes have not been fully taken into account in Healthcare for London and would like further reassurance that changes to health services have in fact been planned using correct assumptions about future population growth.

Yours sincerely

Anthony Clements
Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer

CC: Gabrielle Teague, Head of Communications, Healthcare for London
Councillor Mary O'Connor, Chairman, Pan-London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Louise Peek, Officer Clerking Team, Pan-London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Ben Vinter, Officer Clerking Team, Pan-London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

All Members and Supporting Officers, Outer North East London Joint Health
Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Ralph McCormack, Chief Executive, Havering PCT
Paul Kennard, Head of Communications & Scrutiny Lead, Havering PCT