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LANARKSHIRE NHS BOARD		

NAN BRAES
NEIL ACHEW

16 December 2016

Dear Neena,

NHS LANARKSHIRE: 2015/16 ANNUAL REVIEW

1. This letter summarises the main points and actions in relation to NHS Lanarkshire's Annual Review, held in Coatbridge on 4 October.
2. As you know, I want to ensure the rigorous scrutiny of NHS Boards' performance whilst encouraging as much direct dialogue and accountability between local communities and their Health Boards as possible. As one of the Boards that did not have a Review chaired by a Minister this year, you conducted the Review meeting in public on 4 October. You clearly outlined progress and challenges in key areas and gave local people the opportunity to question yourself and the Chief Executive. I asked Government officials to attend the Annual Review in an observing role. This letter summarises the main points and actions in terms of NHS Lanarkshire's performance in 2015/16.

Introduction and opening comments

3. As in previous years, all Boards are expected to submit a written report to Ministers on their performance over the previous year, together with plans for the forthcoming year. This self-assessment paper gives a detailed account of the specific progress the Board has made in a number of areas and is available to members of the public via the NHS Board's website, alongside this letter. I understand that you opened the meeting by presenting a helpful summary of the progress that NHS Lanarkshire has made in a number of areas over the last year. You reiterated the Board's clear focus on patient safety, effective governance and performance management; and on the delivery of significant improvements in local health outcomes, alongside the provision of high quality, safe and sustainable healthcare services.
4. I understand the Review was well attended by local people who took full advantage of the opportunity to ask the senior team questions following the initial presentations. I am grateful to those who took the time to attend and share their views.

Health Improvement

5. I welcome the approach in NHS Lanarkshire in addressing health inequalities and the focus on early years and young people, ensuring that every child has the best start in life. The sustained focus on the wider determinants on health will be progressed as the new Health and Social Care Partnerships gain momentum.

6. NHS Lanarkshire is to be commended for the Board's excellent performance in respect of delivering the national target that 90 per cent of people referred to alcohol and drug treatment services should be treated within three weeks from date of referral. NHS Lanarkshire achieved 100 per cent performance at March 2016. The Health Board and its planning partners continue to make strong progress with the embedding of ABIs as a key activity in challenging alcohol related harm. This includes established delivery in priority settings as well as developing wider delivery in a range of areas, including criminal justice, mental health, older people and police custody suites.

7. The Board is to be commended for its sustained achievement against both the 31-day and 62-day cancer access standards. Indeed, performance against both standards has been sustained at or above 95% for 2015/16.

Patient Safety and Infection Control

8. Rigorous clinical governance and robust risk management are fundamental activities for any NHS Board, whilst the quality of care and patient safety are of paramount concern. Considerable work has been undertaken at all levels in recent years to ensure that Boards effectively respond to the findings and lessons to emerge from numerous high profile reviews such as the Francis Inquiry and previous reports in relation to events at Mid-Staffordshire NHS Trust and not least the recommendations made by Lord MacLean in the Vale of Leven Inquiry.

9. I know that there has been a lot of time and effort invested locally in effectively tackling infection control; and this is reflected in the Board delivering a 72% reduction in the rate of MRSA since 2007 and a 92% reduction in cases of clostridium difficile infection in those over 65 over the same timeframe. That said, the Board narrowly missed its March 2016 HEAT target for clostridium difficile and SABs, though the position is improving and I know you remain committed to making further progress.

10. I was impressed by the significant reductions in catheter use and reductions in catheter associated infections and in the decreased incidence of pressure ulcers.

11. The Healthcare Environment Inspectorate (HEI) was set up by the former Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing with a remit to undertake a rigorous programme of inspection in acute hospitals. During 2015/16, the HEI carried out an unannounced inspection at Monklands District General Hospital. The Board has given me the assurance that all the requirements and recommendations identified as a result of this inspection have been properly addressed.

Improving Access – Waiting Times Performance

12. NHS Lanarkshire has generally performed well on the suite of elective access standards during 2015-16. NHS Lanarkshire's performance for a first outpatient appointment continues to be challenging and long waits have occurred across a range of specialties which in turn impacted on performance for 18 weeks RTT.

I have been assured that recovery plans are in place for all specialties to reduce the backlog. Given the proportion of new outpatients who may require subsequent treatment, and the consequential impact this may have on delivery of their Treatment Time Guarantee, very close management will be necessary to mitigate the risk and ensure that all stages of the pathway are completed as quickly as possible.

Officials from the Access Support Team will continue to closely monitor performance on the suite of elective access targets and standards, and will remain in close dialogue with NHS Lanarkshire throughout 2016-17 to ensure that agreed performance outturns are achieved.

13. A number of Health Boards across Scotland have struggled to meet and maintain the 4-hour A&E waiting target over the last year. The position in NHS Lanarkshire has been challenging at times throughout the year. You have assured me that meeting and maintaining the target remains a key priority for the Board. You explained that, as well as the core issues like delayed discharge, the level of senior staffing, GP out of hours cover and effective patient flow, there have been different issues affecting some of the main acute sites. The Board achieved 94.1% against the 4-hour target at end of March 2016. The Government's Unscheduled Care Team will continue to keep in close touch with the Board to monitor progress and to offer on-going assistance and support.

Health and Social Care Integration

14. The North and South Lanarkshire Integrated Joint Boards both went live on 1 April 2016. Both Partnerships are now developing detailed plans for delivering integrated health and social care services across their localities and a number of work streams are underway. I note the success of the Hospital at Home service in North Lanarkshire and the South Lanarkshire Community Support Team and look forward to hearing how both approaches develop.

15. Whilst acknowledging the general pressures on certain services and social care budgets, I have been assured that there has already been progress in terms of tackling delayed discharge and developing intermediate care services that provide alternatives to acute hospital admission and step-down care, where appropriate, following discharge. Such developments will be key in terms of appropriately planning for winter and future pressures, as Partnerships focus on ensuring, wherever possible, that people with community care needs are directed to the most appropriate care and services.

Finance

16. It is vital that NHS Boards achieve both financial stability and best value for the considerable taxpayer investment made in the NHS. I am therefore pleased to note that NHS Lanarkshire met its financial targets for 2015/2016. Clearly, overall economic conditions mean that public sector budgets will continue to be tight whilst demand for health services will continue to grow. Nonetheless, you confirmed that the Board continues to actively monitor the achievement of all local efficiency programmes and, whilst the position is challenging, NHS Lanarkshire remains fully committed to meeting its financial responsibilities in 2016/17 and beyond.

Conclusion

17. I would like to thank you and your team for hosting the Review. I understand the meeting was well received by attendees, and hope the approach helps in encouraging as much direct dialogue and accountability as is practicable. I thank the Board and its staff for a sustained performance in 2015/16: it is clear that the NHS Lanarkshire is making significant progress in taking forward a challenging agenda on a number of fronts, including improving access, maintaining tight financial control and developing local services. The Board has good relationships with its planning partners, and is fully aware that effectively building on such relationships will be crucial in continuing to progress the local health and social care integration agenda.

18. Whilst I am happy to acknowledge the many positive aspects of performance in NHS Lanarkshire, I know you are not complacent and recognise that there remains much to do. I am confident that the Board understands the need to maintain the quality of frontline services whilst demonstrating best value for taxpayers' investment. We will continue to keep progress under close review and I have included a list of the main performance action points in the attached annex.

*Best wishes,
Shona*

SHONA ROBISON

NHS LANARKSHIRE ANNUAL REVIEW 2015/16

MAIN ACTION POINTS

The Board must:

- Keep the Health Directorates informed of progress with its significant local health improvement activity
- Continue to review, update and maintain robust arrangements for controlling Healthcare Associated Infection
- Continue to deliver on its key responsibilities in terms of clinical governance, risk management, quality of care and patient safety, including a prompt and effective response to the findings of HEI and Older People in Acute Care inspections
- Keep the Health Directorates informed on progress towards achieving all access targets; in particular, the 4-hour A&E target and outpatient performance
- Continue to work with planning partners on the critical health and social integration agenda.
- Continue to achieve financial in-year and recurring financial balance
- Keep the Health Directorates informed of progress with redesigning local services in line with the Board's clinical strategy

