



Department
of Health

Your Ref: ZA19451/OM

PO00000889748

Bill Wiggin MP
House of Commons
Westminster
London SW1A 0AA

From Dr Dan Poulter MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Health

Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2NS

Tel: 020 7210 4850

28 OCT 2014

Dear Bill,

Thank you for your letter of 26th September to Jeremy Hunt about Hereford County Hospital.

I was pleased to read your praise for the NHS staff at Hereford County Hospital, and I understand your wish for the hutted wards at the hospital to be replaced. In light of your concerns, Department of Health officials contacted the NHS Trust Development Authority (NHS TDA) and NHS England for information.

I understand that the Chief Executive of Wye Valley NHS Trust, Mr Richard Beeken, has commissioned a review of the Trust's estates and facilities. This review includes a proposal to replace the two remaining surgical hutted wards. The Trust is producing a business case for the replacement wards. It needs to submit outline strategic and business cases to the NHS TDA for consideration and approval, before making a full business case.

The Trust would also need to seek capital financing from the Independent Trust Financing Facility (ITFF). Where a trust has capital spending plans that will cost more than it has available, it can apply to the Department of Health for a loan that would be considered by the ITFF to ensure that the trust can afford it. If a loan cannot be afforded, the Department of Health may consider providing public dividend capital (PDC) to support the trust's capital spend. PDC is usually made available if it is needed to ensure patient safety. PDC cases need the assurance and support of the NHS TDA for NHS trusts.

The NHS TDA and NHS England advise that Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) would also need to be in a position to fund the additional staff needed

to modernise inpatient services. A discussion about this will form part of the contract negotiations between the Trust and the CCG for 2015/16.

As you will be aware, Wye Valley NHS Trust has been placed into special measures following publication of the Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection reports on 14th October. The special measures process will ensure that the Trust gets the support it needs to make improvements.

The NHS TDA will ensure that the Trust takes all necessary action to urgently address the concerns raised in the CQC report, with appropriate support so that the Trust can provide high-quality patient care. The NHS TDA will appoint University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust as a partner organisation or 'buddy' to work with Wye Valley NHS Trust and provide this support.

The Trust will be required to publish an improvement plan that details all the actions it will take, with oversight from the NHS TDA and the CQC. In addition, the NHS TDA will appoint an improvement director to act on its behalf.

The Trust continues to work with Herefordshire CCG and other local partners to agree a strategy to improve the services provided. The strategy should ensure sustainability of services at the Trust. The NHS TDA also continues to work closely with the Trust to identify the additional support it might need in the short to medium term.

I hope this reply is helpful.

Best Wishes,



DR DAN POULTER