



## East of England All Party Parliamentary Group

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Dear Matt

### **COVID-19: Health care services - innovation, integration and improvement in the East of England**

As you will be aware the last meeting of the Group held 'virtually' on Thursday 16th July, heard an update on plans for a Children's Hospital and a Cancer Research Hospital for East of England as well as discussed the importance of, and potential for, social care integration.

It was agreed that as Co-chairs we would write to you to both outline the key points raised and to invite you to respond with the Department's view. Taking each of the three subjects in turn:

#### **The Children's Hospital**

The Group heard that the East of England is the only region in the UK without a purpose-built children's hospital. With Government approval and £100m funding announced in 2018, Cambridge Children's Hospital will be co-designed with children, young people and families in mind. It will lay healthy foundations for the 1.5 million children and young people in our region and the adults they become.

MPs were pleased to hear that Cambridge Children's Hospital will be the first hospital in the world to offer physical and mental health care seamlessly integrated at the bedside, co-located with the world-leading research of the University of Cambridge. Research has shown how whole genome diagnosis provides real benefits to children in the NHS. This is more than just integrated healthcare; the hospital will be looking to understand the early origins of disease affecting both physical and mental health, to build resilience and improve life trajectories, and to shift from reactive care to prevention.

MPs were also pleased to hear that using the latest digital technologies, the plan is to deliver care to communities beyond Cambridge and share biomedical expertise, nationally and across the globe. Finally, the Group were told that an ambitious £100m fundraising campaign, "A Whole New Way", will be launched in Autumn 2020, recruiting philanthropic resources to help the NHS.

A number of questions arise:

1. *Would you please give an update regards whether the planned completion date of 2025 for the new Children's hospital is on track?*
2. *To what extent can the public rely on this being built with taxpayers' money – in other words how dependent is the project on philanthropy, private sector finance and public fundraising?*
3. *How will the Department ensure that the new resource is accessible to, and benefits all, communities in the East of England? In particular will it have sufficient in-patient capacity including intensive care and operating theatres and out-patient capacity including provision of digital and remote support to care for treatments in the community?*

## **A new Cancer Research Hospital**

The Group heard that the proposed cancer research hospital for the NHS can deliver the long-term plan by being a fully integrated centre for early cancer detection, uniting physicists, chemists and engineers with primary and tertiary NHS specialists and patients to develop and deploy early detection devices. Overall it has the potential to diagnose cancer earlier and therefore save lives, reduce treatment intensity and cost.

MPs also heard that the proposed research hospital would be a fully integrated centre for AI/ML based precision cancer medicine, uniting computational scientists, imaging specialists, data scientists and mathematicians with NHS specialists and patients to develop and deploy precision cancer medicine approaches.

Finally, this exciting project would by maximising the use of IT and telemedicine, manage patients closer to home and unite primary and tertiary care while avoiding the need for patients to disrupt their lives and travel to hospital. As was pointed out, life sciences in UK are a £72billion industry generating 480,000 jobs. East of England is at the heart of this and is a global leader.

A similar set of questions arise:

- 1. What is the Department's update regarding a completion date for the new Cancer Research hospital?*
- 2. To what extent can the public rely on this being built with taxpayers' money – in other words how dependent is the project on private sector finance?*
- 3. How will the Department ensure that the new resource is accessible to, and benefits, all communities in the East of England?*

## **The importance of, and potential for, NHS and social care integration**

MPs heard that “integration” spans at least six key themes - integration between NHS Providers, integration between mental health and physical health, integration between health and social care, digital integration, integration between local authorities, integration and personalisation. Generally, the development of these six themes depend upon mature and exemplary partnerships and collaboration across the public sector (and beyond). However, MPs were told that these themes are not yet fully aligned in terms of policy, delivery, or ‘the narrative’ – nationally or locally.

MPs were told there has been some better integration between NHS and social care because of CV19 – for example the previous tensions when discharging patient to home, for example about who pays for support, has gone for now. In addition, the importance of community nursing has become more apparent – and the collaboration with the voluntary and community sector has improved. However, changes to hospital discharge policy, assessment processes and pathways post Covid, and a continued focus on integrated approaches to hospital discharge across health and care, is still required. It was also stated that CV19 had exposed the fragility of the care market, highlighting an urgent need for a re-boot of joint commissioning and quality assurance for care providers.

Finally, there were calls for parity of esteem between NHS and social care – and for the reform of social care. The issue of funding of PPE - which for the NHS was top-sliced from budget but for social care has to come from local authorities – was also raised with a plea that it should be top-sliced for all. It was also pointed out that ‘health devolution’ is operating towards the margins of the 2012 Act and that this may need to be changed now collaboration is at the heart of NHS and social care. Data sharing was specifically raised as one issue where legislation may be required.

Again, a number of questions arise:

1. *Does the government support the principle of parity of esteem between NHS and social care – and what does it consider the most important lessons from CV19 regards NHS and social care 'integration*
2. *What is the Department's view on the specific point regards funding of PPE in the social care sector?*
3. *What is Government's approach to, health devolution and the need for legislative reform?*

We trust you will consider these questions and respond in due course. If you or one of your Departmental colleagues would like to attend a future meeting of the Group to discuss these issues in person you would be most very welcome to do so.

Yours sincerely



**Peter Aldous MP**

**Co-Chairs, East of England All Party Parliamentary Group**

*Sent on behalf of the Co-Chairs by the Secretariat*

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