

From the President:
Professor Terence Stephenson
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By e-mail to: clivepeedell@btinternet.com

To:

Dr Clive Peedell MRCP, FRCR

Dr Jacky Davis FRCR

Dr Peter Fisher FRCP

6 October 2011

Dear Colleagues

Thank you for your open letter received through the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges on 9th September, relating to the Health and Social Care Bill, and I apologise for the delay in responding, due to a series of overseas visits including speaking to the Ministers of Health of the Council of Europe.

I have read through the comments made in your letter and acknowledge the points made. I also noted that your letter was co-signed by at least 22 members of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health. Our health policy team has endeavoured to engage widely with members to seek their expertise and views in a range of areas, including our responses to consultations on the Bill and direct links with other stakeholders, including officials from government departments and partner colleges.

There is clearly a level of concern expressed by your co-signatories about the passage of the Bill and the implications of its implementation. I appreciate the strength of feeling engendered by the proposals and the importance of ensuring that the NHS continues to follow the principles by which it was established. As President of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health I also acknowledge that we have a responsibility to ensure that the health needs of children and young people are not compromised. Services must continue to work together efficiently and effectively towards improved outcomes for this important 22% of the community.

The impact of challenge by the Health Select Committee, together with other representations from clinicians and the Future Forum has contributed to a wide scale reform of some major planks of the Bill. This reduced many of the areas of concern relating to children's services, particularly relating to those for disabled children, such as co-terminosity, collaboration rather than competition, and the strengthened requirement for wider clinical advice to inform commissioning decisions but there remain many significant areas of concern which we have identified for the next stage of the Bill including child

protection in healthcare, the implications of competition and its threat to integration, GP practice boundaries and training proposals.

I will continue to press vigorously for improvement in children's healthcare services through the re-formed Future Forum and extensive engagement with Lords, MPs and other stakeholders, aiming to influence the Bill, but equally importantly, the secondary legislation and formal guidance that will arise from it.

Withdrawal of the Bill is an option for parliament. If it is not withdrawn, we need to make sure that implementation of legislation that had no public mandate does not disadvantage children and young peoples.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Terence Stephenson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Professor Terence Stephenson
President