

For the attention of:

Dr Jackie Applebee, Chair,
Tower Hamlets Local Medical
Committee

Dr Simon Brownleader, Chair,
Tower Hamlets GP Care
Group

Dr Sam Everington, Chair,
Tower Hamlets, Clinical
Commissioning Group

Simon Steven
Chief Executive Officer
NHS England
Skipton House
80 London Road
London SE1 6LH

Tuesday 17th April 2018

Dear Colleagues,

GP AT HAND

Thank you for your letter dated the 29th March in which you outline your concerns regarding the GP at Hand GP practice in Hammersmith, West London and the potential impacts of this model of service on GP practices in Tower Hamlets in particular. I am responding on behalf of NHS England.

You highlight the challenges facing general practice including workload pressures and retention of GPs. We remain focussed on tackling these issues through the commitments made in the General Practice Forward View including the commitment to increase funding to general practice to £12 billion by 2020/21.

It was good to hear of the progress being made in Tower Hamlets in using new technology to expand access and respond to the growing demand for mobile services. With a growing patient demand for such services, the adoption and acceleration of digital services is indeed part of the future for primary care.

I understand that the GP at Hand service has presented some challenges because of its novel service model. However, it has undoubtedly proved an attractive service to patients who have found accessing traditional general practice difficult. Working with the commissioner, Hammersmith and Fulham CCG, we continue to keep the GP at Hand service under close scrutiny to ensure we can make timely assessment of its impact and develop appropriate policy responses.

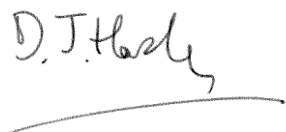
The current evidence base on the impact of this and similar services is as yet limited. We need to fully understand the issues and impact to support any future policy development required in a range of areas such as funding flows, information governance and existing models of general practice. With this in mind, Hammersmith and Fulham CCG have commissioned an independent evaluation of GP at Hand to develop a robust evidence base on which to deepen our understanding of the issues and inform any future decisions about the commissioning of the GP at hand and

OFFICIAL

other digital services. I understand that the Londonwide LMCs have had opportunity to feed into the scope of this work.

With regard to your concern that patients are not being advised that they will be de-registered from their existing practice, this issue has been investigated by our London team and I can confirm that the registration process involves patient acceptance of three separate warning messages advising them that they are consenting to leave their current GP practice. Information on the GP at hand website also explains that patients will be leaving their current practice and re-registering with GP at hand.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. J. Hardy". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line that serves as a separator.

Dominic Hardy
Director of Primary Care Delivery