

Ref BM HH 2020-08-21

Dr Craig Gillespie  
South Sefton CCG

Dr Rob Caudwell  
Southport & Formby CCG

Dr Andrew Pryce  
Knowsley CCG

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Date: 21 August 2020

By email

Dear Colleagues

Thank you for your letter, dated 14th July 2020, outlining your collective views of the future of CCGs in your area and apologies for not joining the meeting earlier this week. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your teams for your hard work, commitment and dedication during the COVID-19 response over the recent months. It has been, without doubt, an incredibly challenging time and the outstanding effort by all staff to limit the impact of this unprecedented pandemic on our North West population has been humbling to observe. The pause in both provider and CCG mergers has allowed colleagues the requisite time to focus on patient care.

As we now turn our attention to recovery and restoration of services, I am in regular discussion with both national and system leaders, reflecting on the impact that the pandemic has had on our services and structures across the North West, particularly within the Cheshire & Mersey area, and exploring opportunities going forward. One of the key principles outlined in the 2020/21 NHS Operational Planning Guidance is the “system by default” model with the desire to create one CCG per ICS/STP footprint.

I am in dialogue with Alan Yates and Jackie Bene and have requested that they urgently develop an ICS plan for the future of strategic commissioning in Cheshire and Merseyside area, noting the requirements of “system by default”. Jackie and Alan both recognise that local integrated commissioning at a place level remains vital to ensure delivery of appropriate services for place population, they equally acknowledge the advantages of commissioning at scale where appropriate.

The primacy of place, and importance of clinical leadership, combined with a larger strategic commissioning function require further development at pace, and as such I don’t feel there is merit in progressing with the North Mersey CCG merger as this is not on a scale that matches the national direction at this point.

NHS England and NHS Improvement



I understand this was discussed during the meeting earlier this week and Jackie Bene was able to articulate the plan for moving to a single CCG for Cheshire & Merseyside by April 2022 by first having a Committee in Common in place by March 2021. Place will be an integral part of the new working arrangements and I hope you will support this locally working with your Primary Care Networks.

Yours sincerely



Bill McCarthy  
Executive Regional Director (North West)

cc

Jackie Bene, Chief Officer, Cheshire and Merseyside Health and Care Partnership  
Clare Duggan, NW Regional Director of Strategy and Transformation  
Linda Buckley, NW Director of Strategic Transformation/Locality Director