

Rt Hon Andy Burnham MP
Shadow Secretary of State for Health
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

Simon Stevens, CEO
Skipton House
80 London Road
London, SE1 6LH
0113 825 1103
england.ce@nhs.net

Dear Andy

30 July 2014

NHS contracts for clinical services

Thank you for your letter of 29th July.

As you know, most funding decisions on patient care – including for services mentioned in your speech - are now taken by groups of local family doctors and other frontline NHS staff. These local Clinical Commissioning Groups have statutory responsibility for planning and commissioning care for their local populations.

For those health services directly commissioned by NHS England, Parliament has placed on us a number of duties, including the duty to promote a comprehensive health service, to secure continuous improvement in quality and outcomes, to reduce inequalities, and to promote patient and public involvement, integration, education, and research. We are, as appropriate, required to observe European public procurement regulations originally introduced in 2006, and related UK law. In everything we do we are also required to exercise our functions effectively, efficiently and economically. As a result we are advised that a blanket contracting ban would not be permissible.

That said, NHS England will certainly continue to ensure - for example in our new Winterbourne View work to commission better support for people with learning disabilities, and our work to improve child and adolescent 'tier 4' mental health services - that our approach is at all times guided by the twin tests of 'thinking like a patient, and acting like a taxpayer'.

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Stevens'.

Simon Stevens
Chief Executive, NHS England

High quality care for all, now and for future generations