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NHS 24,

Severin G (Gillie)

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Sent: 30 January 2008 11:39
To: Severin G (Gillie)
Subject: Independent Scrutiny Panel

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Chief Executive's Office

Nicky Scammel
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Date: 21 January 2008
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Dear Nicky Scammel

INDEPENDENT SCRUTINY PANEL

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Independent Scrutiny Panel, NHS 24 as a national organisation has a different set of challenges than that experienced by territorial health boards.

It is our view that the document is written in a way that focuses specifically on proposed service change within territorial health boards and does not reflect the service delivery environment of the boards like ourselves or the Scottish Ambulance Service.

In our context it is not entirely clear what would constitute a "major service change". For territorial boards the definition and the proposed assessment criteria appear clear. However for NHS 24 the definition of major service change using the draft criteria could define almost everything we do. Likewise the direct reference to unscheduled care may mean that every service change contemplated by NHS 24 would fulfil the criteria for close public scrutiny. I am sure that this is not the intention of the document so perhaps some specific guidance directed towards special health boards should be considered.

NHS 24 supports the concept of an expert panel scrutinising major service change proposals and that it could add genuine value to the process if it ensures that the information and advice available to inform public debate is of a high standard and that the evidence base for any service change decision is the best available and suitably peer reviewed this would ensure that appropriate weight and consideration is given to all the available evidence and that that evidence is available in an accessible format for all, which will ensure openness and transparency.

For any panel to be successful the Chair must be seen as being truly independent and not there to prosecute any one agenda. This applies equally to panel members be they clinical or lay members. If this is rigorously applied the constitution of the committee in simple number terms becomes less important.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this document.

Yours sincerely

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