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Dear Colleague

Barking and Dagenham, Havering, Redbridge and Waltham Forest CCGs are committed to making long term improvements to urgent care services in our area. In order to achieve this, we have developed a project, which we want to let you know about through this letter. By urgent care, we mean hospital urgent care centres, walk-in centres, GP out of hours, NHS 111 and Waltham Forest's single point of access service – all urgent healthcare services up to the front door of A&E. **This project does not cover hospital A&E services.**

At the moment we commission these services from a range of providers. All of the contracts in relation to these services expire in 2015. We know that a range of different services, from different providers, makes it more difficult to deliver joined-up services and continuity of care for the patient. Working with our partners in health and social care, through local urgent care working groups, we believe that commissioning the entire urgent care pathway in a joined-up way and potentially from a single provider, will result in an improved seamless service for patients.

Earlier this year we ran a series of workshops to look at the urgent care pathway. These sessions included attendees from each CCG, clinicians and local authority colleagues. The workshops looked at a number of issues including improving standards of care, integrating services, innovation, effective signposting of services, engagement with patients and promoting self-care. The feedback from these workshops strongly indicated that linking up urgent care services across Barking and Dagenham, Havering, Redbridge and Waltham Forest would significantly improve the care a patient receives.

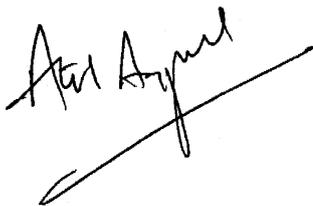
It was agreed that in order to look at new and innovative ways of delivering services, we would run an exercise that allows us to discuss and develop new ways of delivering services with interested parties. Through formal procurement 'dialogue' meetings with bidders, we will be able to shape the requirements of the new service, consulting further with local people and interested groups, and then agreeing and formally awarding the contract. This process is known as 'competitive dialogue'.

The whole process takes 9-12 months and in order to meet the required timeline for this procurement, an Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) notice has now been placed online.

The next stage will be to review initial bids and begin formal discussions or 'competitive dialogue' with bidders in the autumn. We are also committed to involving other interested people, including patients, in discussions and will continue to provide regular open and transparent updates to you in the coming months.

In the meantime, if you have any queries please do get in touch with the CCGs by emailing our communications lead at Andrew.Strickland@onel.nhs.uk

Yours sincerely



Dr. Atul Aggarwal
Chair, Havering CCG



Dr. Anwar Khan
Chair, Waltham of Forest CCG