

VIA EMAIL

15 September 2017

Dr Minh Alexander

Dear Minh

Capacity of NHS Improvement's whistleblower employment support scheme

Thank you for your letter of 16 August regarding the whistleblower support scheme, and also for your engagement in work that has been undertaken to date in developing the scheme.

I recognise that you are concerned about the delay in the scheme being developed. I believe that colleagues have already apologised for this, and I would add my own to that. We are due to launch the pilot whistleblowing scheme during September and NHS Improvement's Board and Executive Team will be supporting the next stages of the scheme.

This is very important work and we must make sure we get it right. We want the scheme to meet whistleblowers' needs as fully as possible, within the criteria outlined in the Francis report. We believe that a pilot is the best way to understanding the level of demand for the scheme, and the type of support needed. There are quite a few important details to work through – for example, under the scheme, providers will offer placements to whistleblowers, and we will need to ensure that these are established in a way that supports the individual, and is sustainable for providers when operated at scale.

We intend to conduct a pilot phase, between September and spring of 2018, which will involve around 10 participants. This will allow us to fully understand the needs of people who may wish to access the scheme and to design the future offer accordingly. NHS England has also recently launched an equivalent whistleblowing scheme for primary care, and the proposed timing means we can consider the lessons learned from this scheme as it begins to operate at scale.

Although the pilot will have limited places, the scheme in the future will *not* be limited to that number, and we will determine the appropriate scale as part of our pilot evaluation, which the design group will be involved in.

I hope this responds to the issues you raised in your letter, but please do let me know if you would like to discuss this matter further with my team. Our ultimate aim remains to help whistleblowers get back into employment.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim Mackey', with a small dot at the end.

Jim Mackey

Chief Executive, NHS Improvement

Cc: Kate Moore, General Counsel, NHS Improvement
Steve Russell, Executive Regional Managing Director, NHS Improvement
Principal Private Secretary (Acting), Secretary of State for Health, Department of Health