

Mr Alastair McLellan  
Editor  
Health Service Journal

11 December 2013

Dear Alastair

We write to correct the misleading impression of the situation in the Oxfordshire healthcare system given in your recent report - 'Trusts force delay in outcomes based commissioning plan'. It takes a very partial view, as if a rather technical discussion about the best way of achieving improved outcomes through different approaches to commissioning was the only show in town - it is not. We believe that transformational change is essential in Oxfordshire, as it is in so many other places, and we are determined to be leading the way. Our three organisations have been working closely together for some time with other partners to make this change happen.

What we have already achieved has been recognised by others as being at the leading edge - the Abingdon Emergency Multidisciplinary Unit (a joint project between our three organisations) recently won the Guardian Healthcare Award for Service Innovation, and it is now being replicated across the county. We have also recently agreed a major remodelling of mental health services which brings 7 day a week community services, much closer ties to GP localities and greater integration with our third sector partners. Innovative and collaborative approaches between our organisations are helping to ease the path of patients as they leave hospital.

The comment attributed to Paul Corrigan, "everybody says [large providers] need to change their model of care. But only when commissioners say we're really going to do this do they sit up and take notice" could not be wider of the mark. We do not subscribe to that adversarial model - there is no 'battle of Oxford' - instead we are already committed to a high level of collaborative service innovation and we see the role of new models of commissioning, as being to develop a sensible, outcome orientated incentive structure which supports innovative and more integrated care for patients.

We invite you to visit Oxfordshire to see this collaboration on the ground and we hope that you will then be able to report a rather more balanced picture.

Yours sincerely



Stuart Bell CBE, Chief Executive, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust



Sir Jonathan Michael, Chief Executive, Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust



Dr Stephen Richards, Accountable Officer, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group