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Our Ref HK/KH
Your Ref
Enquiries Dr H Kohli

Public Petitions Clerks
Room T3.40
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
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Dear Mr Sharratt

Thank you for your correspondence of 10 June.

This response aims to provide an understanding to the Petitions Committee of the decision made Lanarkshire NHS Board in December 2014 about referrals from Lanarkshire to the Centre for Integrative Care (CIC). The Board papers can be accessed at

<http://www.nhslanarkshire.org.uk/boards/2014-board-papers/Pages/December.aspx>

In 2010 NHS Lanarkshire's Clinical Effectiveness Group considered homoeopathy and concluded that NHS Lanarkshire should review the effectiveness of providing homoeopathy. In September 2012 Lanarkshire NHS Board agreed that a review of homoeopathy services for the residents of Lanarkshire be undertaken under the aegis of the Homoeopathy Review Group. Following the review, the Board agreed in November 2013 that a wider consultation, guided by Scottish Health Council (SHC), be undertaken on the options for homoeopathy services under the aegis of Homoeopathy Stakeholder Reference Group.

The Homoeopathy Review Group was chaired by the Director of Public Health and included representatives from North Lanarkshire Public Partnership Forum, NHS GG&C regional services directorate, planning, nursing, communications and staff representatives. GP input was provided by the Medical Director (Primary Care). The evidence considered by the Review Group included the services delivered by the CIC, information from visits undertaken by the Review Group, activity data (in 2013/14 there were 64 inpatients and 152 new outpatients from Lanarkshire seen by the CIC), input from patients including a patient survey, a GP survey, and a literature review.

Based on advice from the CIC, the Review Group accepted that it would not be possible to refer patients only for some therapies and not others provided by the CIC. Therefore it agreed that the literature review should cover a number of therapies provided by the CIC. These were:

- Homoeopathy
- Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT)
- HeartMath
- Mistletoe for cancer symptoms, and
- Music and movement therapy.

The literature review concluded that there is no evidence of clinical effectiveness for homoeopathy nor the other health interventions noted above. The Review Group's view was, on the basis of the

evidence, “not to recommend referral to the CIC, which offers homoeopathy and associated services”.

Following the review, the Board agreed in November 2013 that a wider consultation be undertaken guided by Scottish Health Council (SHC). A three-month public consultation took place on the question “Should NHS Lanarkshire support referrals to the Centre for Integrative Care (Glasgow Homoeopathic Hospital)?” This was overseen by the Homoeopathy Stakeholder Reference Group, which included the Review Group membership with the addition of three patients and clinical representation from the CIC. The Reference Group developed the public consultation document which formed the basis of the information provided to all stakeholders during the consultation process.

The consultation document contained information from CIC, the case for cessation of new referrals, and how patients could be treated under existing services should the referrals to the CIC cease. The third commentary was included at the recommendation of the SHC and was not a pre-judgment that the service would cease. Existing Lanarkshire services include the chronic pain management service, psychological services (including the Addictions Psychology Service and the psychological service for older people aged 65 years and over), self-management approaches (to promote empowerment and independence), ALISS (A Local Information System for Scotland, a search and collaboration tool for health and wellbeing in Scotland), and condition-specific services for long-term conditions.

There was a large response to the consultation with just under 6,000 responses, and nearly 75% of respondents were not Lanarkshire residents. Just over 80% of those responding wished referrals to continue. Homoeopathy and other treatments provided by CIC are undoubtedly popular with patients, but this cannot, and does not, answer the question of the *effectiveness* of homoeopathy or other services offered by CIC.

This was not an easy decision for the Board but at the heart of the issue is the issue of effectiveness of homeopathy and the other treatments offered by the CIC. This is the same test we would apply to any other service we review e.g. a surgical technique or a drug treatment. Consequently, the Board decided that new referrals of Lanarkshire residents to the CIC should cease on the basis of the lack of clinical effectiveness evidence for homoeopathy and other health interventions provided by the CIC.

The Board also agreed that patients who were currently being treated by CIC services would not be discharged prematurely and would continue being treated until their course of treatment is completed.

I trust this clarifies the issue that the Board considered not just homoeopathy but also the other treatments offered by the CIC. The CIC itself identified during the review that it is not possible to refer patients to the CIC for some services and not others because of the holistic approach of the

CIC. Therefore the consultation was based on the question of whether to refer patients to the CIC or not, and not on the basis of access to specific services offered by the CIC.

Finally with regard to the petition itself, national funding for the CIC is an issue for Scottish Government. However, irrespective of how the CIC is funded, it does not alter the fact of the lack of evidence of effectiveness of the treatments provided by the CIC.

Yours sincerely

Dr Harpreet Kohli
Director of Public Health