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Our ref: NM/LW – NHS Midlands and East Cluster 001

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Dear colleagues

The Establishment of Strategic Health Authority Cluster for the Midlands and the East

I am delighted to have been appointed as the Chief Executive of NHS Midlands and East, the new SHA Cluster covering the East Midlands, West Midlands and East of England Strategic Health Authorities. As you may know this is one of four Clusters being established, the others covering the South of England and the North of England, with London remaining as it is.

The new Clusters will assume responsibility with effect from the 3 October 2011 when a new single Board for NHS Midlands and East will be established, chaired by Sarah Boulton who is currently the Chair of NHS East of England.

The existing Strategic Health Authorities will retain their statutory responsibilities. This means that Ian Cumming and Kevin Orford will continue as Chief Executives in the West Midlands and East Midlands respectively, until 3 October 2011. I will be working with Ian and Kevin up until this time to learn and understand more the local issues and opportunities of the areas they lead so effectively.

SHA Clusters will exist until the 31 March 2013 when they will be abolished. By then, subject to Parliamentary approval, the NHS Commissioning Board, Public Health England and other new statutory bodies will be established and they will assume their new responsibilities.

The objectives for SHA Clusters are:

- **Day to day delivery** – Ensuring that services for patients are developed, financial control is maintained and QIPP plans are delivering. The overriding priority will be protecting and enhancing patient safety and quality.
- **Building the future** – The Cluster will play its full part in leading the implementation of the Government's reforms of the NHS. This will involve supporting the development of Clinical Commissioning Groups', ensuring good collaborative working with Local Government to support the establishment of Health and Wellbeing Boards, Healthwatch and new Local Public Health arrangements, and we will do what is necessary to enable the establishment of other arrangements for workforce and education, informatics and communications functions. We will also continue a sharp focus on supporting NHS Trusts to become Foundation Trusts.

- **Supporting our Staff** - we need to step-up our efforts to support our staff who are affected by the proposed reforms but also those working within every facet of the NHS during these challenging times. We will be launching a Cluster wide programme of additional support for staff.

For the remainder of this month and during September, Sarah Boulton and I intend to meet as many people as possible in the new Cluster. Our priority will be staff within the three Strategic Health Authorities and also leaders within PCT Clusters. We would also like to meet leaders of Clinical Commissioning Groups and Local Government Leaders and Chief Executives.

Between now and October I will be moving quickly to establish a new, single Executive Team for the Cluster. Precisely how the new Board and the Executive Team will work needs some thought and I expect we will be able to make some announcements about this in the not too distant future.

Even though there will be a single Board and single Executive Team for the Cluster, it is important to restate that there is no intention to move to a single Headquarters or for staff within the existing SHAs to be re-organised unnecessarily. All existing SHAs are currently consulting on issues Clustering has for staff.

I have established a Business Centre to be headed up by [Dr Ed Garratt](#), to support me and the new Board with the plethora of work we need to undertake over the next three to six months. This Business Centre will be based in NHS East of England for now, but we will review our future needs in the coming weeks.

This is a time of significant uncertainty for many people, especially staff in SHAs and PCT Clusters, but I am committed to ensuring all staff are supported in the way they need and want. I want to reassure you all, that I personally am committed to doing everything possible to support staff, so that is why we will be launching the Cluster wide programme of additional support for staff as a priority.

I am genuinely excited about the opportunities that the establishment of the Cluster creates. There is so much good practice in all three regions that we now have the opportunity to spread much more widely for the benefit of patients and to ensure we play our fullest part in building the future.

Arrangements are already being made for Sarah and me to meet people and further opportunities will be organised in the near future. However, if you feel there is something urgent that requires an early discussion with either Sarah or me, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Ed Garratt, ed.garratt@eoe.nhs.uk or Carmel Usher, Executive Assistant, carmel.usher@eoe.nhs.uk.

Yours sincerely



Sir Neil McKay CB
Chief Executive
NHS East of England