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*Richmond House  
79 Whitehall  
London  
SW1A 2NS*

Candy Morris  
Chief Executive NHS South East Coast  
York House  
18-20 Massetts Road  
Horley  
Surrey RH6 7DE

*Tel: 020 7210 3000  
mb-sofs@dh.gsi.gov.uk*

*Dear Candy,*

**CHANGES TO WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES AT MAIDSTONE  
AND TUNBRIDGE WELLS NHS TRUST**

Thank you for reporting to me about planned changes to women's and children's services in West Kent on 30 September 2010.

As I said in my letter to you of 1 July 2010, and after accepting advice from the Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP), your further assessment and report should not prejudice the work to open Pembury hospital as planned, nor the current work in establishing and centralising inpatient services there.

I have studied your report in detail and carefully considered its findings against the backdrop of the assurances I was seeking and my endorsement of the IRP's advice made public on 1 July 2010 still stands.

I hope you will continue to actively engage with stakeholders to ensure where there are any outstanding concerns, these are addressed as services continue to be implemented at Pembury hospital.

I would expect you to publish your report in its entirety in due course.


When I visited Maidstone hospital on 24 November 2010, I was left in no doubt of the commitment of future GP commissioners to maintaining a wide range of services

at the Maidstone site and I support the continuing development of the midwife led unit there.

In the light of this, I am asking the SHA, PCT and Trust to reconsider the level of paediatric input to the A&E and engage with GPs as the future commissioners of services regarding the appropriate level of specialist input. This should not prejudice the centralisation of inpatient services as scheduled.

My conclusion does not prejudice any future decisions made by local commissioners. If in future GPs as commissioners assess that a need for services at Maidstone is unmet, then it will be their prerogative to seek to redesign and commission services on that basis.

I am copying this letter to Marion Dinwoodie, Chief Executive, NHS West Kent and Glenn Douglas, Chief Executive of Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust and Bryan Cope, Vice Chairman of Kent County Council's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

*Yours etc,*  


**ANDREW LANSLEY CBE**