



Department
of Health &
Social Care

*Edward Argar MP
Minister of State for Health*

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Sir Robert Francis QC,
Chair, Healthwatch England,
By email to: josephine.buckle@healthwatch.co.uk

3 April 2020

Dear Sir Robert,

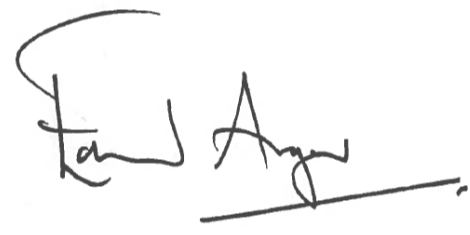
Thank you for your letter of 23 March setting out what patients and the public would like to see included in the 2020-21 mandate to NHS England and NHS Improvement, based on views gathered by the Healthwatch network. I and my colleagues very much appreciate your support for making Covid-19 the NHS's top priority at the current time.

The coronavirus outbreak is the biggest public health emergency in a generation. Your work on behalf of patients and the public is always very useful and has been particularly helpful during this unprecedented period. Staff throughout the health and care system are putting enormous personal effort, every single day, into helping us to reduce the impact and spread of Covid-19 and to provide the best possible support to those affected by it. I welcome the insights that I know your staff are sharing with national organisations for health and care and the Department of Health and Social Care about patient's experiences of revised local health services.

At this time, as you will be aware, we have published a shorter mandate, with the intention that we will publish a full and more detailed mandate later in the year when management of the coronavirus situation allows. In light of this, I hope you will forgive me for not replying in detail in the usual way to the recommendations you have laid out at this time. However, I will of course provide you with a full response in the usual way when the more detailed mandate is published. The detailed recommendations that you have provided on wider priorities are hugely important and will continue to be reflected upon carefully by my officials at the Department of Health and Social Care, and I look forward to returning to them in the future.

Once again, thank you for your letter and recommendations.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward Argar". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

EDWARD ARGAR MP