

From the Rt Hon Andrew Lansley CBE MP
Secretary of State for Health



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Councillor Dr Peter Skolar
Chairman
Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
County Hall
New Road
Oxford OX1 1ND

Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2NS

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

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Dear Dr. Skolar,

Thank you for your letter of 14 July about the employment of nursing staff at Chipping Norton Hospital. Please accept my apologies for the delayed response. I appreciate the time you have taken to outline the concerns members of *The Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)*. I also recognise that this is a particularly emotive issue for local people in the Chipping Norton Community.

It is clearly in the interest of all the parties involved that this matter is resolved with the best interests of patients in mind. Although local health organisations are generally better placed to make decisions about the health services within their community, it is also important that local concerns are taken into account and that staff are consulted properly. The situation at Chipping Norton Hospital is no exception.

We have spoken with the Chair of South Central SHA, Dr Geoffrey Harris, who agrees that it is important that a pragmatic solution is found that does not detract from the quality of services Chipping Norton Hospital provides. Dr Harris is working with Oxfordshire PCT and other parties towards this end, and recently wrote to David Cameron outlining a proposal by the PCT to ensure that new recruits will receive NHS terms and conditions until a review of the current arrangements has taken place. I understand that this proposal will be discussed in detail at a meeting with the HOSC on 10 November.

Your letter also sets out a proposal to ask members of the Independent Reconfiguration Panel to visit Chipping Norton to act as an 'honest