



Dr Matthew Sweeting

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Executive Medical Director

Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board

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Matthew Hopkins

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Chief Executive

Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust

(via email only)

1st October 2024

Dear Matthew

Re: Redesignation of the Southend Neonatal Unit (NNU) to a level 1 facility

I thought it would be helpful to clarify the expectations from the ICB and the regional specialised commissioning team concerning the redesignation of the NNU at Southend Hospital. The NNU at Southend was temporarily changed to level 1 status due to staffing levels, quality concerns, and the impact on the provision of paediatric services at Southend Hospital. We understand that the Trust now wishes to make these changes permanent. As such, your team approached the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) in March 2024 as part of the process. At the time, they did not feel sufficient information was provided concerning the patient voice, engagement with wider stakeholders, and general adherence to due process.

The ICB Chief Nurse (Dr Giles Thorpe) and I have discussed this with the Managing Director of Specialised Commissioning for East of England (Dr Lynelle Hales). As you are aware, the ICB and the Specialised commissioning team are supportive of the change and feel the rationale is sensible and clinically sound. Dr Hales has confirmed that a robust engagement piece with key stakeholders is all that is required and *not* a formal consultation process. This has been confirmed with NHS England.

Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board

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Following on from this, a member of the regional specialised commissioning team has already reached out to your team at Southend Hospital, and within the Women and Children's Division, to support them as they navigate through the HOSC process / People Scrutiny Committee again. Giles and I would be happy to support you with this, including any representation at the ICB Clinical Congress, which is akin to the regional Clinical Senate at a system level. This can provide the clinical scrutiny required for the engagement process.

I hope this clarifies matters for your team.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Sweeting', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr Matthew Sweeting

Executive Medical Director (MSEICB)

SRO for Specialised Commissioning Mid and South Essex ICB

Cc: Di Sarkar, Christine Blanshard, Niki Eves, Dr Lynelle Hales, Tom Abell,

Claire Hankey