

Rt. Hon Jeremy Hunt MP  
Secretary of State for Health  
[MB-SofS@dh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:MB-SofS@dh.gsi.gov.uk)

3 September 2015

Dear Secretary of State

### **NORTH CUMBRIA UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS NHS TRUST**

As you know, North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust has been in special measures since July 2013 following its inspection by Bruce Keogh's team. I am writing to advise you of my findings and proposed next steps following our latest inspection.

We had previously inspected this trust in May-June 2014, to check progress after approximately 12 months in special measures. At that time, we found that there had been improvements in a number of areas, but they were not yet sufficient to assure me that the trust would achieve a 'good' rating within a reasonable time. Although we found that all services were caring, overall we rated every service except critical care as 'requires improvement'.

Our latest inspection, in March-April 2015, checked progress after a further period in special measures. In June 2015, the North Cumbria health and care economy was also selected as one of the first three challenged areas to enter the Success Regime for system-wide intervention and support.

You will see from the previous and current rating grids appended to this letter, that our latest inspection shows a noticeable increase in green cells (i.e. ratings of 'good') at both sites. The trust is definitely making improvement. However, there are still too many amber cells ('requires improvement') for me to be able to recommend that the trust comes out of special measures and, despite nearly two years of support, medical care at Whitehaven is rated 'inadequate' for safety and responsiveness.

Having discussed our findings with the NHS Trust Development Authority, it is our shared view that while the trust needs to make further progress, some of its biggest challenges come from the way in which local services are structured, and cannot be solved by the trust on its own. In particular, the trust continues to face significant difficulties in medical, nursing and midwifery staffing, and has a high use of locum and agency staff in order to maintain appropriate staffing levels where services are provided across both of its sites. Access to services and 'flow' once patients have been admitted are both poor.

Current business approaches within the local health system have not enabled the trust to develop an agreed plan with its local partners on the future arrangement of services across the sites such that they will be of sustainable good quality. We particularly noted the lack of a clear, agreed plan for maternity services at the Whitehaven site.

Although I have considered whether further requirements should be placed on the trust, I am of the view that the Success Regime – with its system-wide approach – is the key means for making sure that services improve further. The trust should remain in special measures, with the NHS Trust Development Authority continuing to provide it with support such as an Improvement Director and closely monitoring progress against plans. But the health and care economy as a whole, through the Success Regime, needs to address the local structural problems, monitored by NHS Improvement and NHS England.

I expect the Success Regime to ensure that progress is made quickly, by demonstrating that:

- a sustainable clinical strategy for services provided by North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust is agreed by the trust and its partners and is published within six months from now, and
- a plan for the future organisation and management of acute services in the area (such as a transaction) is agreed and starting to be implemented within 12 months from now.

CQC will continue to monitor progress at the trust, and to work closely with NHS Improvement. If we find that satisfactory progress is not being made so as to meet the two milestones above, I will re-consider whether to use CQC's powers to impose further requirements. For the trust, this will mean consideration of special administration, cancellation of registration or placing conditions on its registration. For commissioners, this will mean consideration of an investigation under s.48 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Richards', written in a cursive style.

**PROFESSOR SIR MIKE RICHARDS**

Chief Inspector of Hospitals

# West Cumberland Hospital

## 2014

	Safe	Effective	Caring	Responsive	Well-led	Overall
A&E	Requires improvement	Not rated	Good	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Requires improvement
Medical care	Inadequate	Requires improvement	Good	Requires improvement	Good	Requires improvement
Surgery	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Good	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Requires improvement
Critical care	Good	Requires improvement	Good	Good	Good	Good
Maternity & Family planning	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Good	Requires improvement	Good	Requires improvement
Children & young people	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Good	Good	Requires improvement	Requires improvement
End of life care	Good	Good	Good	Good	Requires improvement	Good
Outpatients	Inadequate	Not rated	Good	Requires improvement	Good	Requires improvement
Overall	Inadequate	Requires improvement	Good	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Requires improvement

## 2015

	Safe	Effective	Caring	Responsive	Well-led	Overall
Urgent and emergency services	Requires improvement	Good	Good	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Requires improvement
Medical care	Inadequate	Requires improvement	Good	Inadequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
Surgery	Good	Good	Good	Requires improvement	Good	Good
Critical care	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Maternity and gynaecology	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Good	Good	Requires improvement	Requires improvement
Services for children and young people	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
End of life care	Good	Requires improvement	Good	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Requires improvement
Outpatients and diagnostic imaging	Good	Not rated	Good	Requires improvement	Good	Good
Overall	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Good	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Requires improvement

# Cumberland Infirmary

## 2014

## 2015

	Safe	Effective	Caring	Responsive	Well-led	Overall
A&E	Requires improvement	Not rated	Good	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Requires improvement
Medical care	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Good	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Requires improvement
Surgery	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Good	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Requires improvement
Critical care	Good	Requires improvement	Good	Good	Good	Good
Maternity & Family planning	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Good	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Requires improvement
Children & young people	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Good	Good	Requires improvement	Requires improvement
End of life care	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Good	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Requires improvement
Outpatients	Inadequate	Not rated	Good	Requires improvement	Good	Requires improvement
<b>Overall</b>	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Good	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Requires improvement

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Critical care	Requires improvement	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Maternity and gynaecology	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Good	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Requires improvement
Services for children and young people	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
End of life care	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Good	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Requires improvement
Outpatients and diagnostic imaging	Requires improvement	Not rated	Good	Requires improvement	Good	Requires improvement
<b>Overall</b>	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Good	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Requires improvement