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By Hand

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Dear Eric,

London retention and reward package

I wanted to write to you following, Phil's email to me last week, setting out your concerns about the lack of a formal response that has been made to your email to Ann Radmore in November 2014 about a "London package". I know that Jason let both Phil and yourself know that I was on annual leave last week and I wanted to take this opportunity to write and respond now that I am back in the office.

I am sorry that we have not, as a Trust, been able to respond to the list of issues that you set out in November last year until now.

On a wider point I want to make sure that my Executive Management Team (EMT) and I work more closely with you and other trade union colleagues going forward and to ensure that is the case I have impressed on the workforce team the urgent need for us to bring forward final proposals for a revised set of consultative arrangements. We can then ensure that a regular dialogue over emerging issues takes place and that we do genuinely work together to make our service better for our patients and our staff. I understand that discussions have already taken place regarding a partnership review.

On the specific issues that you raised in your email to Ann I thought I would provide an update on each of them as the Trust currently stands. This follows detailed conversations with EMT in recent weeks about what steps we can take towards each element of the retention and reward package you have proposed. I will take each of them from your original note in turn below.

All Paramedics at Band 6

The executive team and I share your view that our paramedics should be well rewarded for the great work they do day in, day out, across London, often in difficult circumstances, making a real difference to the lives of thousands of Londoners each and every day. The challenge we have is the costs associated with moving all our 1700 or so band 5 paramedics to band 6. The estimated value of such a decision is £8.8m annually and we simply cannot afford this with our current finances and the way we currently operate. We will have to work together and make some pretty bold decisions over how we might be able to generate internal savings to the value we need to be able to afford to make the move to band 6.

I think we should begin early discussions about what these things could look like so we can develop ideas, cost them and bring forward joint plans to deliver them so that we can, in time, move all our paramedics to band 6. I know that Jason has spoken with you about how we might cap the progression within the band, stage implementation and make savings from changes to practices such as rest breaks to support this change and these are all things we will need to do together with other initiatives, to be able to afford band 6 for 1700 paramedics.

I thought it would be helpful beforehand, given the scale of this challenge and the importance for us both getting it right for our staff and our service, to agree a formal project structure with joint management and staff side membership with regular meetings and work plans to get traction on this pressing issue.

A re-think of the Senior Paramedic role

Following the appointment of the first 127 senior paramedics from the cohort of 500 that commissioners have recurrently funded I asked for a review of the entry criteria as I felt that it was too divisive. We've also reviewed the training package and its delivery method.

On entry criteria, when we restart the programme in the next couple of weeks we will make it far simpler for paramedics to apply for this promotion. We will also change the training to a modular method of delivery based on the feedback from the first group to complete it.

I think the senior paramedic role is a good thing for us to do; it builds on the steps we have made to develop a clinical career structure for our staff and offers our paramedics real opportunity for development and promotion within our service so they don't have to look elsewhere for career progression.

Technicians' future to be secured

I am pleased to be able to confirm here today that we will take no action to redefine or change the existing role of our Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). They have been the backbone of our service for many years and with the 300 or so we have remaining in the Service we shall retain them going forward on their existing terms and conditions (our local band 5 agreement) and continue to utilise them fully on frontline duties as we have done for many years.

Make it easier, and affordable, for our own staff to study to become Paramedics

We have made real progress in the last year or so with Health Education England (HEE) and the Local Education Training Boards (LETBs). We've secured money to provide a bursary scheme for our paramedics to apply for funding to support their continued professional development and I'm really pleased to see that many have already secured this financial support.

In addition, we have been lobbying hard to secure equity for paramedics with other registered healthcare professionals in regards to the funding of their initial training. As you know this is a national issue and not one that we can resolve on a regional basis. I remain committed to continuing to work to make it more affordable for staff to train as paramedics and I will update you as the national discussions progress.

I'd also highlight here the LAS Academy that we will introduce in January next year. This will replace what was the old internal 'EMT to paramedic' conversion programme and will mean that EACs and EMTs have a protected, available and LAS run route to progress to paramedic. We have had our initial inspection of the programme by the HCPC of the programme to secure their accreditation and I'm really pleased to say that we are on track to run the first pilot courses through the academy in January 2016. As the Academy develops and grows we will begin to offer other education programmes through it for a range of our staff, not just those in frontline roles.

Make it financially attractive for all staff to stay with LAS

I think this would be connected to the band 6 issue for paramedics and the steps we have taken in recent years for EMTs and EACs. That of course doesn't provide any further support for other staff groups and especially those in corporate teams and operational non- frontline roles.

We had to pull away from providing free travel for all staff due to the likely costs as they worked out to be more than we had originally forecast. That was a shame as it would have been a great thing to do especially for corporate staff. I know that you met Tony Crabtree recently and made a suggestion about an alternative arrangement to all staff but limited to weekend travel. We will need to explore this and see if it is viable and affordable.

In the restructure of the HR team that Karen is leading we will dedicate a role to seeking out and making available to all our staff other non-pay benefits that they will benefit from. These could include specific discounts on everyday items or a greater range of salary sacrifice schemes such as those for computers, tablets and smart phones.

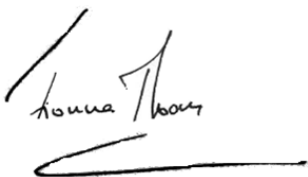
As you know we did submit evidence to the pay review body last year lobbying for a rise in the London allowance to better reflect the true costs of living and working in London. I will continue to champion this for the benefit of all our staff. We are also aware of and supporting a piece of pan-London work which is exploring similar opportunities for NHS employers across the capital.

Create a unique London Package for all our staff that recognises the stresses and strains of working in London

I agree we should do this and that it should be an all-encompassing and comprehensive package of measures. Some, like the protection of the EMT role we can confirm now, whilst others will take time and our collective commitment to seek out and implement changes to how we work to enable us to be able to afford them. In this package we will need to make changes to annual leave and rest breaks that I know you've discussed with Jason over many months and have agreed some principles. We will need to change how we respond to calls and when and how we deploy our staff to create greater efficiency. We will also need to consider what other measures we can deliver to create the savings we need to be able to afford a comprehensive package for our staff. I want to achieve this in partnership with you and all trade union colleagues as I believe this is the best thing to do for our service.

In summary, I know that there is common ground between us as we both aspire to make everyone who works at LAS proud of our service and to return it to one that truly does provide world class care to every patient through staff that are well rewarded and recognised for the part they individually play. I would like us to be able to work together in the coming months to develop solutions to the elements of the total package that are yet to be finalised. On that basis it would be great for us to meet informally in the next week or two to begin to frame elements of this and to agree the way we might run a joint project to identify how we can deliver a band 6 solution for all our paramedics together. Perhaps we can discuss the overarching approach in the first instance at our next meeting.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fiona Moore', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Fionna Moore
Chief Executive

Cc: Phil Thompson Unison
 Martin Flaherty AACE