

**To:** All Chief Executives in Acute Trusts in England  
All Chief Executives in NHS Foundation Trusts in England

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**Dear colleague**

During the recent severe weather, my Ministerial colleagues and I have been constantly informed about how the NHS has responded. I want to convey our thanks and appreciation for the effective and committed way in which you and your colleagues have responded in often challenging circumstances. We have all seen the effect that the snow and ice have had on the country, yet the NHS and its partners have continued to provide quality care to their patients. Sir David Nicholson's letter of 23 November set out the importance of effective winter planning, strong leadership and joint working across organisational boundaries, and the last few weeks have shown that the NHS is more than capable of delivering against these criteria.

I have been very impressed by the dedication of NHS staff to keep services available. I know that many of you have made significant efforts to travel into work during this period, staying over at work as and when needed, to ensure that patient care is not disrupted. I am grateful for all of your efforts and am sure your patients and local community are too.

This time of year sees a significant increase in the number of people using our hospitals. I am aware that in addition to the problems presented by the severe weather, there has also been a number of people requiring hospital care for flu or flu-like illness, and increased pressure for beds as a result of norovirus. It is to your credit that our hospitals - working together with local partners - have maintained high quality services throughout this recent period, ensuring patients get the care and treatment they need.

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



I am aware that many of you will be continuing to work throughout the holiday season and I would like to reiterate my thanks to you and your teams for all your hard work, and encourage you to keep working together with colleagues across the health and care system to keep up the excellent response to winter demands. I wish you all a safe and happy Christmas period.

**Yours sincerely**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Andrew Lansley'.

**Andrew Lansley CBE  
Secretary of State for Health**