NHS
Commissioning Board

Quarry House
Quarry Hill
Leeds, LS2 7UE

**To: NHS chief executives**

04 March 2013

Dear Colleague

There are few institutions the public feel more passionately about than the NHS. For nearly 65 years we have provided care, free at the point of need to people who often come to us at times of great personal anxiety. They trust us to provide the best possible care, and for most of the time throughout these 65 years we have. Yet this year we have seen the report into the terrible failings at Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust which amounted to a betrayal of the care that the vast majority of staff joined the NHS to provide.

I have apologised personally, and on behalf of the NHS, for these failings. But apologies are not enough. The NHS response must be to put a commitment to high quality care at the centre of all that we do, and to transform our relationship with patients.

There have been many recent achievements that demonstrate what staff across the NHS are capable of achieving. We have seen dramatic improvements in safety and care - healthcare acquired infections have been cut by more than half, the numbers of patients facing the indignity of mixed sex accommodation has been cut by more than 90%, and more than 90% of patients are treated within 18 weeks. Most importantly of all, the service you provide retains high levels of public confidence and trust.

We now face an economic environment that means resources are going to be limited for some time. We also face increasing demands on our services from an ageing population. Our response must not be to simply work in the same way, whilst stretching ourselves more thinly. If we do this our patients will suffer. We must get the best possible value from every pound spent in the NHS in order to provide the best care for patients.

So now, more than ever, innovation has a vital role to play in delivering higher quality care. We have the potential to create the best health system in the world, enhancing the quality of life for people with long term conditions, preventing people from dying prematurely, helping people recover from ill health and ensuring that patients have a positive experience of care.

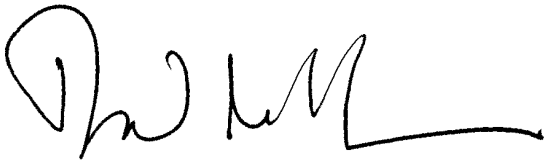
We must make innovation core business for the NHS and innovation must become everyone's business. It is for this reason that I am encouraging NHS staff to attend the Healthcare Innovation Expo on the 13 and 14 March 2013 in London. Expo 2013 is the largest event of its type in Europe and will showcase the very best innovations in healthcare, including the latest technologies, products and care pathways.

Over the two days, thousands of delegates from the public, private, academic, scientific and business communities will attend Expo 2013. Colleagues from across the NHS will be able to discuss, debate and see first hand how innovation can deliver quality improvements, value for money and drive economic growth. Over 250 UK and international organisations will showcase what is brightest and best about innovation in healthcare, and dynamic and inspiring speakers from some of the world's most innovative organisations will share their knowledge and expertise.

You can register your attendance at www.healthcareinnovationexpo.com, enter the following code to NHSINNO13 and click 'apply' to claim your complimentary ticket. There are a limited number of complimentary tickets, so you should register whilst they are still available.

But our commitment to innovation is not just about two dates in the calendar. Whether or not you are able to attend Expo, I would encourage all of you to think about how innovation can help you to do your job better, and provide better care for patients, whilst using NHS resources more efficiently. As NHS Chief Executive I have had the privilege of visiting healthcare staff across the country, and seeing many examples of fantastic innovation. I want to encourage you and all staff to learn from the innovation that already exists in the NHS, and to use this to drive improvements within your own organisation.

Yours sincerely



Sir David Nicholson
NHS Chief Executive & Chief Executive of NHS Commissioning Board