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Our Ref: DL/KR
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Dear Cabinet Secretary

ALCOHOL & DRUG PARTNERSHIP FUNDING

I write in respect of the position regarding Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP) funding for West Lothian Integration Joint Board taking account of the Scottish Government expectation that existing ADP services, resources and outcomes are maintained at 2015/16 levels.

As you will be aware there was a 23% reduction to ADP funding in 2016/17 compared to 2015/16 funding levels. For NHS Lothian overall, this resulted in 2015/16 ADP funding of £11.470 million being reduced to £8.887 million for 2016/17. In terms of West Lothian ADP commissioned services, via West Lothian Council, this was reflected in reduced funding of £350,000 for ADP services.

For 2016/17, NHS Lothian was unable to balance its overall budget position and following submission of the local delivery plan there remained a gap of £14 million. As part of its financial planning process for 2016/17, NHS Lothian passed on the relevant share of its baseline budget increase to all Lothian IJBs but given the significant overall budget gap was in no position to meet the shortfall in 2016/17 ADP funding which would have increased this gap further.

In terms of 2016/17 the West Lothian IJB agreed that the shortfall in ADP funding would be met on a one off basis through one off measures. However, it was agreed that ADP commissioned services should be reviewed and revised to bring 2017/18 planned expenditure in line with the reduced resources available and a report brought to the Board for consideration. This decision was taken in the context of significant budget pressures being faced by the West Lothian IJB in the current financial year and the increased financial challenges anticipated for 2017/18 which will result in further substantial savings required across IJB functions.

A report was presented to the West Lothian IJB on 29 November 2016 setting out measures that would allow expenditure on ADP commissioned services to be brought in line with reduced funding available. This report took account of a full review of commissioned ADP services and consultation with stakeholders. While every effort has been taken to minimise the impact on service users and outcomes, there was concern from the Board and officers around the increased risks that may result from the savings required to manage within budget resources available. A common theme of the discussions was that this client group are particularly vulnerable and that decisions taken by the Scottish Government around prioritising health and social care funds should take account of this.

Taking account of the reduced ADP funding available and an overall budget that is already under immense pressure, the Board reluctantly, but unanimously, accepted the recommendations in the report to make the savings in ADP commissioned services. In taking this decision, the Board agreed that I should write to you to highlight West Lothian IJB's concerns, especially in relation to the expectation that the same service and outcomes could be maintained when funding has been reduced by 23%, and there are significant pressures in other high priority health and social care services and ever increasing demands that exceed annual funding increases.

West Lothian IJB is committed to the delivery of improved outcomes for alcohol and drugs through a robust strategic commissioning approach. On behalf of the Board, I would request that existing and future ADP funding is considered in the context of growing needs in this area and to consider if there is scope to increase ADP funding as part of future year budget settlements.

I look forward to your response in due course.

Yours sincerely

Cllr Danny Logue
Chair
West Lothian Integration Joint Board

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