

LETTER TO HOUSE OF COMMONS HEALTH COMMITTEE

3.10.2016

To Health Committee, 3 October 2016

Dear Dr Wollaston and colleagues,

Complaints handling by the Care Quality Commission

I write to submit evidence that is pertinent to Health Committee's previous inquiry on Complaints and Raising Concerns, and to the Committee's forthcoming accountability hearing with the CQC.

Health Committee recommended in its inquiry report on Complaints and Raising Concerns that the Department of Health should undertake an overdue evaluation of progress on changing complaints culture and practice. The Committee also noted the CQC's expectations of best practice in complaints handling, as set out in CQC's 2014 report "Complaints Matter". In this report, CQC's Chief Inspector of Hospitals stated:

"We will hold health and social care services to a high standard of listening and acting on people's concerns. We are committed to apply the same standards to ourselves..."

I have reviewed CQC's published information about how it handles complaints against itself. Issues arise about

transparency and accountability, and the fact that CQC is not modeling best practice as it said it would. I have summarised the issues in a paper, which I have published here:

<https://minhalexander.com/2016/10/02/do-complaints-matter-to-cqc/>

As Health Committee will see, part of the opacity arises from the fact that the CQC has not provided complaints data about itself in a uniform manner, which is at odds to the Committee's recommendations in Complaints and Raising Concerns.

As the Committee on Standards in Public Life has recently noted, it is important that regulators hold themselves to the highest standards. I hope that Health Committee can help to ensure more accountable and transparent complaints handling by CQC in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Minh Alexander

cc Chairs of Public Accounts Committee and Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee
Lord Bew CSPL
Sir Amyas Morse Comptroller and Auditor General NAO
Chris Wormald Permanent Secretary Department of Health