Homerton University Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust

Meg Hillier MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

21st July 2019

Dear Meg

Re Ref. [Redacted]

I am writing in response to your letter, dated 21st June which we appear to have received on the 27th June, relating to symptomatic breast appointments at the Trust.

The numbers cited by the Department of Health and Social Care in the attached email relate to the total number of patients seen by the Trust, following a symptomatic breast referral, in each of the given months.

The primary reason for the increase in numbers is due to an increase in the number of referrals received by the Trust from GPs. Indeed, this is a feature of breast referrals in general and not purely symptomatic referrals. We believe that this is likely to be as a consequence of increased awareness amongst the general public and a greater focus amongst GPs on early referrals for potential cancer-related conditions.

Importantly, however, the Trust has generally maintained its ability to deliver the national standard of seeing a minimum of 93% of these patients within a 2 week window. The increase in referrals (and appointments) has not therefore compromised timely access and the Trust is seeing more and more patients within the 2 week requirement. Performance for 2018/19 on a monthly basis was as follows for symptomatic referrals:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breast Symptomatic Attendances</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>154</td>
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<td>Performance</td>
<td>88%</td>
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In order to protect this level of performance, the Trust over the last year has increased the number clinical staff working within the breast service and ensured corresponding capacity in its radiology service so as to allow a one-stop experience for patients.

The Trust is currently, therefore, able to maintain its historical level of service for symptomatic breast referrals.

Incorporating hospital and community health services, teaching and research
I hope that this provides you with a satisfactory level of reassurance.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Tracey Fletcher
Chief Executive