Dear Mr. Stevens,

Detention of children and young people with learning disabilities and/or autism

You will be aware that the Joint Committee on Human Rights is conducting an inquiry into the detention of children and young people with learning disabilities and/or autism. As part of this inquiry we took oral evidence last week (12 June) from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) about its inspection of Whorlton Hall and St. Andrew’s Northampton Adolescents Service.

Speaking at this evidence session Paul Lelliott, Deputy Chief Inspector at CQC, told us that “We have a vital role to play, as the regulator. Our job is to inspect, regulate, pick up these concerns and take the actions that we have at our disposal, but there are other parts of the system that we work together with. Every one of those places in St Andrew’s would have been commissioned, either by NHS England or by a clinical commissioning group, so there is shared responsibility for oversight of that hospital.”

Further to this, I would like to ask a number of questions about NHS England’s oversight of the care it commissioned at Whorlton Hall and St. Andrew’s Northampton Adolescents Service:

- Do you agree with Paul Lelliott that oversight of these institutions is a responsibility that you share with the CQC?

- How many patients with learning disabilities and/or autism were placed by NHS England (either by NHS England's specialised commissioners or local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) commissioners) in a) Whorlton Hall and b) St. Andrew’s Northampton Adolescents Service, in each of the five years to
April 2019? If this information is not collected, why isn’t it and do you have plans to do so?

- What was the total cost of placements made by NHS England (either from NHS England’s specialised commissioning budget or from local CCG budgets) in a) Whorlton Hall and b) St. Andrew’s Northampton Adolescents Service in each of the five years to April 2019?

- What steps did NHS England specialised commissioners take to assure themselves that the care and treatment they were funding at a) Whorlton Hall and b) St. Andrew’s Northampton Adolescents Service was safe and appropriate?

- What steps would you expect local CCG commissioners to have taken to assure themselves that the care and treatment they were funding at these institutions was safe and appropriate?

- The CQC’s unpublished 2015 inspection report on Whorlton Hall stated that external agencies, such as commissioners, did not often attend multi-disciplinary team meetings. On how many occasions in each of the last five years to April 2019 did NHS specialised commissioners attend multi-disciplinary review meetings for patients whose care they commissioned at a) Whorlton Hall and b) St. Andrew’s Northampton Adolescents Service?

- Would you expect local CCG commissioners to have attended these meetings in relation to care placements they had commissioned?

I look forward to receiving your answers to these questions by Friday 28th June.

Yours sincerely

Rt Hon Harriet Harman MP, Chair