



7 June 2010

HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt. Hon. Andrew Lansley, CBE MP
Secretary of State for Health
Department of Health
79 Whitehall
London SW1A 2NS

Dear Andrew

Thank you for your letter of 3 June, following my raising at business questions that day the continuing concerns I have about Wexham Park Hospital's acquisition of Foundation Trust status. I do not consider this is an adequate response to my concerns. The matter I raised initially was that "Monitor may not have exercised due diligence when the application for foundation status was considered." It is thus inappropriate to seek to respond by suggesting that Monitor should investigate its own actions.

As I said when I first raised the matter in February, when asking a question of your predecessor, the view of consultants at the hospital was that the finances were rearranged in order to suggest that the trust was in a much more financially stable situation than in fact it was. I received letters from Andy Burnham of 22 March and 6 April saying the matter was still being looked into but I have heard nothing more. Unless there is a proper account of what happened I believe there will need to be a public enquiry.

I have also received a letter from Monitor offering to explain all to me, but frankly that is wholly unsatisfactory. Monitor approved the application, they are deeply implicated if there was anything wrong and frankly they are not the right body to look into it. You say that Monitor is accountable to Parliament – but prior to acquiring Foundation Trust status this hospital was under NHS control and it is in that period of transition that the actions which concern me occurred. I will refer the matter to the Health Select Committee when it is established but Slough needs to know how this problem arose before then.

I am surprised that there appears to have been no investigation by the region or by the Department centrally and I hope you will request such an investigation. I believe that an in-depth investigation, conducted by a senior officer independent of the decisions at the time, is necessary. I believed from the letters from Andy Burnham, which I attach for ease of reference, that this was happening, and I want to be assured that it has indeed got underway, or if it has not that you will get it going.

It just does not seem credible that within two years of acquiring Foundation Trust status the hospital was facing a £20 million deficit and all its senior executives had left. If there was not criminal deception there was something that needs to be uncovered so that public money is not put at risk in this way again. I welcome your assurance that you will visit the Trust and meet with the consultants and I would hope to join you there. I look forward to hearing from you.

I am also copying this letter to the regional health authority to ensure that they are fully aware of my concerns.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fiona Mactaggart'.

Fiona Mactaggart
Member of Parliament for Slough