

7 July 2016

Dear colleague,

**Re: Dr Henrietta Hughes appointed as new National Guardian for the NHS**

We are delighted to announce that Dr Henrietta Hughes, currently the Medical Director for NHS England's North Central and East London region and practising GP, has been appointed as the new National Guardian for speaking up freely and safely within the NHS.

Dr Hughes selection for appointment was made by a panel consisting of representatives of the Care Quality Commission (CQC), NHS England and NHS Improvement, as co-sponsors for the National Guardian's Office, as well as the Patients Association and Sir Robert Francis QC, whose independent review from February 2015 into 'whistleblowing' across the NHS instigated the creation of the National Guardian role.

Henrietta has over twenty years of experience across primary, secondary and community healthcare. She has been Medical Director since April 2013, providing system leadership across 12 clinical commissioning groups and 12 NHS trusts. She is the Responsible Officer for nearly 3,000 GPs. She will lead the healthcare system on a journey alongside the Freedom to Speak Up Guardians within NHS trusts and NHS foundation trusts, so that ultimately, patients receive the safe, high-quality and compassionate care they deserve.

Her role requires independent judgment, strong leadership skills, the ability to build trust and a clear understanding of the NHS and the challenges its staff face in raising concerns. We are confident she will bring all of these qualities in abundance, when she takes up the role of National Guardian in October 2016.

Henrietta will work four days a week as National Guardian, continuing to work as a GP and GP appraiser outside of this role. The recruiting panel was confident that, with the support of the National Office, she will have sufficient time to undertake the responsibilities. In the interim, the National Guardian's Office will continue to focus on supporting the nomination of Freedom to Speak Up Guardians by 1 October 2016, through a programme of engagement and training events.

Yours faithfully



**David Behan**  
Chief Executive, CQC



**Sir Robert Francis QC**  
Non-Executive Director, CQC