17 February 2017

Dear Harry

Independent Lessons Learned Review – NMC’s handling of Morecambe Bay Midwife Cases

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) announced at their November Council that an independent lessons learned review of its handling of the Morecambe Bay cases should be carried out once all the relevant fitness to practice cases have been completed.

In order to convey the greatest assurance of independence in such sensitive matter, the Department and the NMC believe that the Professional Standards Authority (the Authority), with its established role in legislation, is best placed to carry out such a review.

I am therefore writing to you on behalf of the Secretary of State to ask whether the Authority would be willing to exercise its discretion under section 26 of the NHS Reform and Health Care Professions Act 2002 and carry out an independent lessons learned review into the NMC’s handling of the Morecambe Bay midwife cases.
Subject to the Authority agreeing to carry out such a review, we would appreciate if the Authority could start the review as soon as possible whilst ensuring that any live cases are not compromised.

We will be following up on this letter with a fuller commissioning note stipulating agreed terms of reference.

Yours Sincerely

Claire Armstrong
Deputy Director – Professional Regulation

Copy:
Lee McDonough - Director General - Acute Care and Workforce (Department of Health)
Gavin Larner - Director of Workforce (Department of Health)
Jackie Smith - Chief Executive (Nursing and Midwifery Council)