Dear Colleague

**NHS South Central Workforce Strategy**

The draft workforce strategy for the NHS across South Central is to be considered at the SC SHA Board meeting on 28th January 2010. I wanted to confirm with you the next steps, and our expectations regarding sign off, implementation and accountability.

Thank you all for your involvement to date in developing the strategy and for the time you have contributed at the Workforce Summit, on the reference group, by sending written comments or at the Workforce Conference on 7th December.

The strategy sets out the framework for workforce planning and development in South Central for the next 5-10 years. The strategy is built on a common understanding of the impact that finance, service demand and policy priorities will have on workforce supply and development.

This strategy is very much about using the workforce to enable change and support service transformation as we head into particularly tough financial circumstances. As the workforce accounts for 60-70% of the NHS budget it is likely that a significant proportion of the 16% savings estimated in every organisation will be found through workforce reductions, changes to the workforce profile, and better HR practice.

However, through this strategy we want to ensure that changes to the workforce profile are well managed across the system. We also want to make sure that we don't offer knee-jerk solutions that will affect the delivery of services or damage future workforce supply.

We have been delighted at the level of engagement, discussion and feedback to the first iterations of the strategy and we have received clear messages of support and agreement across the region. If we are to successfully use the strategy to shape the workforce of tomorrow we need to be clear about our roles and responsibilities and confident that we can be held to account for both generating and implementing the strategy.
To this end we have detailed the collective challenges we will face over the next five years and provided a framework through the pledges for us to be clear about our individual roles and responsibilities in delivering on the strategy.

Whilst there is still some uncertainty about specific roles and responsibilities we anticipate the publication very early next year of a range of documents that will help us clarify these. The strategy has been informed from these draft documents therefore we are confident that the strategy will be fit for purpose over the next five years.

I would very much hope, given your strong support to date, that you would take this strategy to your Board for discussion, during January and February, on how you will use the regional strategy to inform your local workforce development plans.

We plan to sign off the final strategy at the SHA Board meeting in March and therefore would welcome any feedback from your Board on the strategy by 28th February to ruth.monger@southcentral.nhs.uk.

If you want further detail on the development of the strategy please read our e-newsletter Workforce Strategy Update available on the NESC website.

Best wishes

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Cc: Andrea Young, Chief Executive