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Dear Andrea and Martin

**QUARTER 3 2013/14 ASSURANCE MEETING**

Thank you once again to you and your team for the approach taken to preparing for and participating in the quarter 3 assurance meeting. As with previous quarters, albeit working with the new Assurance Framework, the opportunity to have an open and honest dialogue with your team proved to be a valuable part of the assurance process.

The timing, and emphasis, of the meeting enabled us to hear about your evolving plans and how you were using these to address some of the current and future challenges that you are facing. In particular, the evolving work on the integration with Darlington Borough Council, and the use of the Better Care Fund (BCF) to support this were key areas.

Please find attached a summary of the actions we shared with you at the end of the meeting, along with a summary of the key issues and assurance judgements for each of the assurance domains. This highlights you as 'Assured' overall, with 5 of the 6 Domains also assured. We have assessed the CCG as 'assured with support' for Domain 3 as a consequence of the financial challenges that you are facing and the support we are providing to you in this area.

If you have any questions please get in touch. We look forward to an ongoing, collaborative dialogue with you with the Q4 assurance process providing a timely opportunity to look back on the first full year and to look forward in terms of delivery of your operational and strategic plans.

Yours sincerely



Cameron Ward  
Director (Durham, Darlington and Tees)  
NHS England

