Dear Mr Kerr,

**Inter Hospital Transport Critical Care Audit**

I write to thank you for participating in an audio link into the North of Scotland Integrated Planning Group meeting held on 24th March 2009, to discuss the Audit of Inter Hospital Transfers of Acutely Ill Adults.

As you are aware, the Audit report had only been received the previous day and it was noted that the majority of members had not had time to read the paper in detail, therefore, it was agreed that any further clarification required or comments would be collated and submitted in a formal response.

You indicated that you are leading a short-life multi disciplinary working group to revise and resubmit the original business case to establish a national Inter Hospital Transfers (IHT) service, to improve quality in response times to the increasing number of IHTs across Scotland. Whilst it is reported that there has been an increase in IHTs of 5.4 per cent between 2004/5 and 2006/7, the audit data is based on a limited snapshot of current activity for acutely ill adults and the reason for the overall increase in unclear. The business case will require to take into account any ongoing or future service redesign that NHS Boards may consider, particularly in light of the ‘Delivering for Remote and Rural Healthcare’ report and national policy to improve local access, where appropriate. It should be noted that appendix ix is missing any data relating to North and East Stations. I would be grateful if you could confirm whether this is a mistake or if data is unavailable.

You noted that the original concept of the service had been well received, however, concerns had been raised around proposed costs and that affordability, use of the critical care trolley and quality would be key drivers for the revised proposal. The issue of affordability remains an issue for the North Boards as members reported at the meeting.

It was also noted that there was limited evidence in the report regarding improved outcomes and although you acknowledged that this required to be developed, the North Boards, in particular the island Boards, would encourage this to be better developed before final approval of any model, as equity must be a key consideration. In our view, the current two tier approach is unacceptable.

I would be grateful if you could confirm when the revised paper will be submitted to your Board for consideration and advise us of the outcome.

You are also aware that I have convened a meeting of representatives of the specialist transfer systems, including EMRS, Neonatal and Paediatric retrievals in order to co-ordinate these systems, As you know, this will take place on the afternoon of 3rd June 2009 in Glasgow, and I hope you will be able to attend.
Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Dr. Annie K Ingram  
Director of Regional Planning & Workforce Development,  
North of Scotland Planning Group