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Dear [name],

Developing older people's mental health services in South Devon

I am writing to let you know that the Board of Devon Partnership NHS Trust has approved plans for a major capital investment in our hospital services for older people with mental health needs. The total investment across the county is £4.6m and I am delighted to say that £1m of this will be invested in a major refurbishment of the Fernworthy unit at South Devon Healthcare NHS Trust.

As you may be aware, the inpatient service at the Fernworthy unit has been suspended for some time pending this refurbishment but it is excellent news that we are now in a position to proceed with the project. Over the next few months we will be pressing ahead with planning and design work, with construction scheduled to commence in November. Our current plans indicate that the refurbished 16 bed unit will be ready to re-open in the summer of 2011.

I am pleased to report that the arrangements for providing care that we have had in place since the service at Fernworthy was suspended have continued to work very well and they will remain in place for the duration of the refurbishment.

Over the coming months we will be meeting with staff, local communities and other stakeholders, in a number of different forums, to talk about the broader challenges we face in delivering sustainable services for older people with mental health needs, and to discuss our longer-term thoughts about the future provision of these services in South Devon.

We will, of course, keep you abreast of progress and developments but please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss this or any other matter.

Kind regards

Iain Tulley
Chief Executive