

Rt Hon Theresa May MP, The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

14 February 2017

Dear Prime Minister,

Meeting the health and care challenge

We are writing as members of National Voices, the leading health and care charity coalition, to set out our concerns about the current extreme pressures faced by the NHS and social care and to offer our help on behalf of the voluntary sector.

We are writing to set out our belief that a new settlement for funding health and care should be included in the forthcoming Spring Budget. This should reaffirm Government support for the Five Year Forward View and prioritise person-centred and community-focused approaches to health and care.

We welcome the announcement of a review of social care and its integration with health, and would like to offer our support and expertise in this review.

Meeting the immediate challenges: a revised settlement for health and care

There is growing evidence of a health system under severe financial pressure. The situation in social care is dire, and having a devastating effect on those who need it, as well as on acute health services.

The current situation is not acceptable or tenable. Access to care, safety, and quality of care are increasingly at risk, along with public confidence. It is vital that the Spring Budget includes a revised and comprehensive funding settlement for health and care.

However, we hope also to see that your government recognises that these symptoms of pressure are not just a matter of winter pressures, or an ageing population. This is not a short-term problem. Rather it is a long-term and long foreseen structural crisis, involving the failure so far to establish effective chronic care models that are appropriate to the majority of healthcare users.

Long-term solutions

A revised settlement must not only be a matter of extra funding for the status quo. A new approach is urgently needed.

More than 70% of the NHS budget is spent on people with at least one long-term condition. This is a severe challenge to a system originally set up to provide reactive care for spells of 'illness,' including acute care. People are being failed by an NHS not set up to meet their needs, resulting in worse health and higher demand for acute services, as seen over the past few weeks.

The Five Year Forward View remains the best plan available for creating a modern and sustainable health and care service. It is not without potential flaws; but it is the most comprehensive attempt to redesign health and care to meet these twenty-first century needs. It sets out a vision of a renewed health and care service that works differently, building a new relationship with people and communities. This means new models of care that put the needs of the individual person first; supporting people to manage their own health better by making informed choices and planning their care; investment in primary and secondary prevention; and partnership working with communities and the voluntary sector.

However, this transformation is at risk, and we are already seeing it being subsumed by the need to focus on hospital deficits.

This 'NHS plan' is also the government's plan: the government adopted it, funded it, and aligned the Department of Health's 'single departmental plan' with it. We urge the Government to reaffirm its commitment, and to ensure that a new financial settlement properly reflects the needs outlined in the Five Year Forward View. This means investment in the capacity for care, treatment and support that lies outside hospitals: in NHS primary care, adult social care, public health and prevention, and in community capacity from the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector.

Therefore, we hope that a new settlement in the Budget will not only increase short-term resources, but plan for the longer term and for a comprehensive approach to funding community-level health and care.

Ensuring equity and excellence in the longer term

We welcome the recently announced review of longer term solutions for social care and its integration with health. This offers an opportunity to re-establish the cross government, NHS, local government and voluntary sector consensus that characterized the Five Year Forward View. Both the long- and short-term pressures need to be tackled. Any solutions aimed at the longer term will not succeed if the current system is left to fail in the meantime.

We would like to offer our help in bringing a cross health and care voluntary sector perspective to this review, drawing on our experience and achievements from our involvement in the NHS Future Forum; our co-leadership of the vision for integrated care; our work supporting the development of the Care Act 2014; and the role we have played in developing the Five Year Forward View, including through chairing the People and Communities Board. We also believe that the review would benefit from working with our sister coalition, the Care and Support Alliance, to advise on the future of social care and funding.

Invitation to meet National Voices members

We welcomed your words about the important role that charities play in public life at your recent speech to the Charity Commission, and were pleased you acknowledged the important work of Mind, one of our members, in supporting people with mental health problems.

The voluntary and community sector can play a vital role in supporting the formal health and care sector, and should continue to be seen as a partner in designing and delivering services. We would like to invite you to meet our members to discuss further the potential for health and care charities to ease pressures on services, as well as the challenges currently faced by the sector.

We look forward to working with you to help create the change needed to transform our health and care services, and move towards a more sustainable future.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Johnstone FRSA	Chair, Access Matters
Peter Walsh	Chief Executive, Action Against Medical Accidents
Margaret Jeal	Chair, Action for Sick Children
Verona Butler	President, Action for Dystonia, Diagnosis, Education & Research
Katherine White	Chair, Addison's Disease Self-Help Group
Paul Springer FRSM FRSPH	Chief Executive, Age Related Diseases and Health Trust
Jeremy Hughes	Chief Executive, Alzheimer's Society
Shantel Irwin	Chief Executive, Arthritis Action
Sue Brown	Chief Executive, Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Alliance
Judi Rhys	Chief Executive, Arthritis Care
Caroline Lee-Davey	Chief Executive, Bliss
Deborah Alsina MBE	Chief Executive, Bowel Cancer UK
Paddy Tabor MVO	Chief Executive, British Kidney Patient Association
Andrew Langford	Chief Executive, British Liver Trust

Dr Peter Lanyon	President, British Society for Rheumatology
Vicky McDermott	Chair, Care and Support Alliance
David C S White	Chair of Trustees, Cavernoma Alliance UK
Dr James Partridge	Chief Executive, Changing Faces
Alison Taylor	Chief Executive, Child Liver Disease
Sarah Wootton	Chief Executive, Compassion in Dying
Max Mackay-James	Director, Conscious Ageing Trust
Dame Christine Lenehan	Director, Council for Disabled Children
David Barker	Chief Executive, Crohn's and Colitis UK
Dr Jonathan Silverman	Past-President, EACH: International Association for Communication in Healthcare
Philip Lee	Chief Executive, Epilepsy Action
Vicky Thomson	Chief Executive, Every-One
Paul Decle	Chief Executive, Forum Link
Chris Whitwell	Director, Friends, Families and Travellers
Bernard Reed OBE	Trustee, Gender Identity Research and Education Society
Alistair Kent OBE	Chief Executive, Genetic Alliance
Donna Wicks	Chief Executive Officer, Hypermobility Syndrome Association
Anne Demick	Chairman of the Executive Committee, IA (the ileostomy and internal pouch Support Group)
Janet Morrison	Chief Executive, Independent Ageing
Robert Music	Chief Executive, Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust
Chris Maker	Chief Executive, LUPUS UK
Karen Friett	Chief Executive, Lymphoedema Support Network
Lynda Thomas	Chief Executive, Macmillan Cancer Support
Dr Jane Collins	Chief Executive, Marie Curie
Dr John Chisholm CBE	Chair, Men's Health Forum
Jenny Edwards CBE	Chief Executive, Mental Health Foundation
Sophie Corlett	Director of External Affairs, Mind
Sally Light	Chief Executive, Motor Neurone Disease Association
Ed Holloway	Executive Director of Services and Support, MS Society
Margaret Bowler	National Coordinator, Myotonic Dystrophy Support Group
Deborah Gold	Chief Executive, National Aids Trust
Debbie Cook	Chief Executive, National Ankylosing Spondylitis Society
Lidia Best	Chair, National Association of Deafened People
Ailsa Bosworth MBE	Chief Executive, National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society (NRAS)

Claire Henry MBE	Chief Executive, National Council for Palliative Care
Jeremy Taylor	Chief Executive, National Voices
Sarah Vibert	Chief Executive, Neurological Alliance
Sarah Yiannoullou	Managing Director, National Survivor User Network
Kath Parson	Chief Executive, Older People's Advocacy Alliance
Ben Pearce	Director, Paintings in Hospitals
Steve Ford	Chief Executive, Parkinsons UK
Collette Thain MBE	Chief Executive, PBC Foundation
Jocelyn Cornwell	Chief Executive, Point of Care Foundation
Allan Anderson	Chief Executive, Positively UK
Heather Blake	Director of Support and Influencing, Prostate Cancer UK
Crystal Oldman	Chief Executive, Queens Nursing Institute
Sue Farrington	Chief Executive, Scleroderma and Raynaud's UK
Alex Fox	Chief Executive, Shared Lives Plus
Heidi Travis	Chief Executive, Sue Ryder
Ian Green	Chief Executive, Terrence Higgins Trust
Margaret Hogg	Trustee, Thalidomide Society
Heidi Wilson	Chair, The I Have IIH Foundation
Arlene Wilkie	Chief Executive, The Migraine Trust
Elizabeth Felton	Chief Executive, Together
Barbara Babcock	Former Chair, Transverse Myelitis Society
Lord Victor Adebawale	Chief Executive, Turning Point
Hazel Pixley	National Secretary, Urostomy Association

CC:

Rt Hon Phillip Hammond MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer

Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP, Secretary of State for Health

Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Simon Stevens, Chief Executive, NHS England

James Kent, Health Adviser, Number 10