



Communities and Local Government Committee

House of Commons, London SW1P 3JA

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Rt Hon Theresa May MP
Prime Minister

6 January 2017

Dear Prime Minister,

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

We are writing to follow up the discussion at the Liaison Committee on 20 December. During that evidence session, as well as in the Chamber, we have each pointed to the importance of a long-term solution to funding for both health and social care.

As chairs of the three select committees with the most direct interest in the future sustainability of the health and social care systems we recognise the need for a political consensus in finding answers to the pressing social care challenges facing the country, but feel that this must also include the NHS.

We were encouraged by your recognition at the Liaison Committee that everyone has a part to play in finding a sustainable way of ensuring social care provision in the future. You also accepted the need for a review to find a way of funding social care sustainably for the long term. We believe that can best be achieved if there is cross-party consensus, and therefore urge you to invite all parties to become involved in a review, which should begin as soon as possible. Given the scale of rising demand, this immense challenge will face whichever Party is in government over the coming decades.

Each of our committees has examined the challenges of financial sustainability from its own perspective. The Health Committee has already concluded that the system is now at breaking point, the CLG Committee will be publishing its findings shortly and PAC continues its scrutiny of financial sustainability of the NHS in a hearing next week. The Lords Committee on the Long Term Sustainability of the NHS is also conducting a full examination of the issue and is due to report in the spring.

The need for an agreed approach for the future has been supported by many organisations, including the Kings Fund, the Nuffield Trust and the Local Government Association, as well as by Simon Stevens, Chief Executive of NHS England, and Stephen Dorrell, Chair of the NHS Confederation. The CLG Committee's recent visit to Germany demonstrated how important such a cross-party consensus is to finding a lasting solution which retains public support.

Successive Governments over many years have recognised the need to address this issue and have commissioned a number of reports, including Wanless and Dilnot, which have reinforced our point. In the last Parliament the Barker Commission also set out a number of options that could be included in a future settlement.

We are calling for a new political consensus to take this forward. This needs to be done swiftly so that agreement can be reflected in the next spending round. We also feel that the ongoing

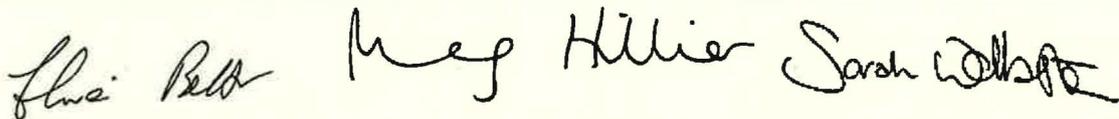
separation of health and social care is creating difficulties for individuals and avoidable barriers and inefficiencies. Any review should cover the two systems.

In short, the problem is widely recognised—we now need political agreement so that a solution for the long term can be found.

For our part we shall do what we can to contribute to a consensus.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Handwritten signatures of Clive Betts, Meg Hillier, and Sarah Wollaston.

Clive Betts MP

**Chair, Communities and
Local Government
Committee**

Meg Hillier MP

**Chair, Committee of Public
Accounts**

Dr Sarah Wollaston MP

Chair, Health Committee