



Department  
of Health

From the Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP  
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*Dear Kingsley,*

Increasingly, the use of patient data and information will be central to the success of the health and care system. It has the potential to revolutionise the care patients receive and aid the development of ground breaking new treatments.

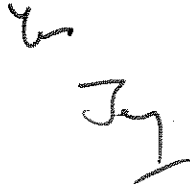
However, I strongly believe that the system can only succeed if the people who entrust health and care services with their personal data have complete confidence that data will be kept securely, wherever it is kept; be it in a hospital, a GP surgery or a care home.

Government and public organisations do not have an unblemished record on data security. As we know, in the health sector since 1st June 2013 there have been 82 reported examples of paper medical records going missing or not being disposed of properly, 10 computers being stolen, lost or insecurely disposed of, and high profile media reporting of cases where NHS websites have been attacked and defaced due to poor security such as the Lulzsec attack on NHS websites in June 2011.

Therefore, as we move towards a more comprehensive system I believe we must use this opportunity to better understand current and future threats to data security and use this information to inform better practices in this area.

I would therefore like the Health and Social Care Information Centre to develop plans to ensure that those entrusted with confidential data – all care settings, commissioning organisations and the staff that work in them – are doing all they

can to protect patient data; to test the extent to which the current procedures are being followed, and to work with other organisations to provide assurance as to the safety of patient data.

Handwritten signature of Jeremy Hunt, consisting of a stylized 'J' and 'H'.

**JEREMY HUNT**