



Department  
of Health



Department for  
Communities and  
Local Government

**From:**

**Norman Lamb MP, Minister for Care and Support**

Department of Health

**Brandon Lewis MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State**

Department for Communities and Local Government

**To:**

Local Authority Leaders

Chairs of Health and Wellbeing Boards

Directors of Adult Social Services

**CC:**

Chair of NHS England

Chair of Monitor

Chair of NHS Trust Development Authority

27 March 2014

Dear Colleagues

**Better Care Fund**

We know that local areas have been working hard to develop Better Care plans ahead of the April 4 deadline. It is encouraging to see local areas are thinking of pooling budgets beyond the £3.8bn, seeing this fund as a catalyst for greater investment and change.

As you are finalising your plans, and whilst recognising the significant challenges that you face, we are writing to urge you to both be as ambitious as you can be and to stress the importance of sustained involvement and engagement of the leadership of the acute sector and primary care.

Through the announcement of the Better Care programme, we have made clear our ambition that better care provided through high quality, joined-up services becomes the standard that your local people can expect.

Therefore your plans should reflect a level of ambition and service transformation that delivers long term sustainability and effective coordination of services. This is part of a fundamental change in the way we work together to provide better care to people, both now and in the long term. In making plans you should expect that pooled funding will be an enduring part of the health and social care system after 2015/16. This is absolutely not a one year only initiative.

It is essential that the acute sector and primary care are active partners in developing local plans, working with you to agree how you will invest in joined up services that help people stay at home for longer, get them home from hospital more quickly and prevent them from getting ill in the first place.

We expect that plans will demonstrate that this engagement has taken place and provide an assessment of the likely impact of plans on reducing pressure on acute partners and achieving the best possible outcomes for local people.

Many of you have told us that you would like to go further towards including primary care in your integrated care plans. We are currently working with NHS England to explore how that might be opened up in future. For now we would encourage areas to be ambitious and creative about what they would like to achieve and to work closely with NHS England Area Teams to achieve as much co-ordination as possible between the commissioning of primary care and other services.

If we want to deliver person-centred care, if we truly want to protect our NHS and care services ensuring they are sustainable and fit for the future, then new coordinated ways of working are the only answer.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Norman Lamb', with a horizontal line underneath.

**NORMAN LAMB**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brandon Lewis', with a horizontal line underneath.

**BRANDON LEWIS**