



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

14 May 2026

Dear Wes,

Thank you for your letter. I am very sorry that you have stepped down from Government. We have worked together for many years and I want to thank you for all your hard work in helping to get us back into Government and for all that you have achieved as Health Secretary.

When we came into Government the NHS was on its knees. Almost two years on, the statistics published today are a result of your work and determination and that of the whole of the NHS. Thanks to the choices we made to stabilise our economy, invest in our public services and reform the NHS, hospital waiting lists have been cut. Patients are now waiting less time for hospital appointments, ambulances are arriving sooner, the NHS is more productive, and people's experience of healthcare is improving. The NHS is back on its feet.

Alongside these performance improvements, you and your team have set out an ambitious policy agenda. The 10 Year Health Plan will modernise the NHS and wider health system. The Casey Commission and Fair Pay Agreement for adult social care puts us on a path to a National Care Service we can be proud of. Alongside this, the National Cancer Plan, HIV Action Plan, National Maternity and Neonatal Investigation, and Life Sciences Sector Plan are all ambitious pieces of work. The Tobacco and Vapes Act will save lives, and the Mental Health Act will improve lives.

This is the difference a Labour government makes. This is the change we are delivering.

Last week's local election results were extremely tough. I know many colleagues saw good friends lose seats. Everyone in our party is acutely aware that our opponents are more dangerous than ever before. They are a real threat to the values we care about, to the communities we represent and to the country we love.

It is incumbent on all of us to rise to what I see as a battle for the soul of our nation. As part of that we must deliver on all of the promises we made to the country, including our promise to turn the page on the chaos that was roundly rejected by the British people at the last general election.

I am truly sorry you will no longer be sat at the Cabinet table helping to transform our National Health Service. But I have no doubt you will continue to play an important role in our party for many years to come. I hope we can work together to show that Labour in power can address the problems our opponents exploit, can install hope where they want despair, and can bring people together where they want division.

All best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Keir', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

THE RT HON SIR KEIR STARMER KCB KC MP