

Dear colleagues,

20 December 2013

Better Care Fund

The way we deliver health and social care services needs to change. One in three children born today expect to live to 100, so demand is only going to increase and we need to make major changes now to create seamless services fit for future generations, and to focus more effectively on preventing ill health and preventing a deterioration to health.

That is why, in June, we announced £3.8 billion worth of pooled budgets between health and social care, starting from April 2015. This will be a multi-year fund, as confirmed by the Autumn Statement, and is the biggest ever financial incentive for councils and local NHS organisations to jointly plan and deliver services, so that integrated care becomes the norm by 2018.

Many places are already working collaboratively and redesigning services to meet the needs of users and communities, but we want to see faster and more widespread change. We have therefore provided an extra £200m in the pool for the transfer from health to social care in 2014/15 to streamline the process. This means that you should be well placed to take maximum advantage of the first full year of the fund in 2015/16. The £3.8 billion fund is the minimum amount to be pooled; some areas may wish to go further.

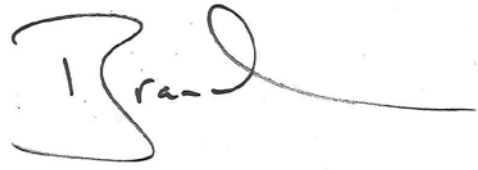
We call on every area to start planning now, with a view to having plans drafted by February 2014. We know the deadlines are tight – this is reflective of the urgency of this work. We need your plans to be innovative and ambitious – the end goal is radical transformation to provide better care.

We have come together in Whitehall so that you can work together at a local level. We need you to link your local plan to those wider determinants of health, and ensure housing and public health priorities and programmes support and enrich this work.

We are pleased to enclose full guidance and allocation information to enable you to make the most of the Better Care Fund.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Norman Lamb". The letters are cursive and connected, with a distinct underline at the end.

NORMAN LAMB

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brandon Lewis". The letters are cursive and connected, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

BRANDON LEWIS