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Please ask for: Ross Jago

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My Ref CSI/14

Your Ref

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing on behalf of Caring Plymouth, the health scrutiny function of Plymouth City Council, to express deep concern at the process imposed upon local authorities and partners in development of the local 'Better Care Fund' (BCF).

The City Council and its partners, through the Health and Wellbeing Board, committed in the summer of 2013 to achieving integrated health and social care commissioning and provision by 2016 and our system is well on the way to achieving this. Our £450 million plans to integrate health and social care commissioning and delivery, developed in response to the Health and Wellbeing Board's challenge, are ambitious but will ensure people will receive better care at home and will result in a reduced need for hospital beds.

You may then understand why further top down interventions from your department in relation to the BCF has done nothing but cause distraction from the journey we are on as a system. The series of revised planning guidance released in July and August has not only had a significant adverse impact on our staff resource and distracted from our wider integration plans but has also deepened this committee's scepticism that the government is committed to a truly localised health and social care system.

Further micro-management from the centre will risk damaging relations between hospitals, CCGs and councils and further waste the precious resources of money, management time and risk outcomes for citizens. Our local partnership working will ensure that we achieve our vision of "Healthy, happy, aspiring communities" and we would request that in future any further directives with relation to health and social care integration take account of work which is taking place locally.

Yours faithfully,

Councillor Mary Aspinall
Chair, Caring Plymouth