



Mr Steve Brine MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State
Department of Health & Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

Councillor Tudor Evans OBE
Leader of Plymouth City Council
Labour Councillor for Ham Ward

Plymouth City Council
Civic Centre
Plymouth PL1 2AA

T 01752 304950
E tudor.evans@plymouth.gov.uk
www.plymouth.gov.uk

30 November 2018

Dear Mr Brine

We are writing as the Leader for Plymouth City Council and Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care for Plymouth City Council.

On 19 November 2018 Plymouth City Council passed a Motion on Notice, which we have enclosed.

This highlights the extent of the reductions to the ring-fenced Public Health Grant, which funds vital services and functions that prevent ill health, tackle inequalities in health outcomes, and contribute to the future sustainability of the N.H.S.

In 2014/15 the Government set out the five year forward view for the N.H.S. in England, which called for a 'radical upgrade in prevention'. However, in every subsequent year the public health grant has fallen in real terms, and in cash terms, between 2015/16 and 2019/20. The total fall in spend per person between 2014/15 and 2019/20 is expected to reach 23.5% - almost a quarter. It is incomprehensible that these sorts of reductions are justified to vital services such as sexual health treatment, contraception, substance misuse, health visitors and smoking cessation services. These services are evidence-based, and are cost-effective in improving people's health, reducing the risk of developing many long term conditions and relieving pressure on all elements of the N.H.S. There has been no satisfactory rationale provided for these reductions; and indeed, no explanation of the blatant disregard of your own strategy when allocating spending.

What is even more shocking is that the distribution of this funding is inequitable and is not adequately targeted to areas of need; Plymouth receives 22% less than the needs-based formula, recommended by the Government's own advisory board (A.C.R.A.), has shown that it requires. This gap (in excess of £3 million) could be put to good use in Plymouth, working to improve those many public health indicators that are worse than England, and ensuring that those which have shown excellent progress over the last few years (e.g. teenage pregnancy, children's obesity at Year 6) are maintained.

Plymouth is rightly proud of the innovative approach we have taken to integration, particularly having integrated commissioning budgets across health (with the Western locality of the NEW Devon CCG), adult social care, public health and other LA functions such as education and housing, developing shared strategies for health and wellbeing, and investing resources in the best way for the population. Through this, transformation of services is delivering on our intent to deliver services in a way that supports individuals, families and communities. Our programme of Wellbeing Hubs, linking services together with community and voluntary sector, in locations that work for key communities is one example of the radical approach we are taking. This has been driven by our commitment to prevention and to tackling health inequalities, doing the very best that we can with the limited funding that we have.

However, the cuts are taking their toll and we are increasingly concerned that the reductions in funding, combined with the inequity in distribution, will soon have a very real impact on the health and wellbeing of Plymouth's population.

It is clear that this lack of strategic approach at government level, coupled with real-terms cuts, has started to show with recent analysis showing a widening of health inequalities, particularly for women. It is time for the Government to take note of its own advisors and to back up rhetoric with action, and we urgently recommend that you;

- recognise the importance of the services that the L.A. Public Health Grant provides.
- apply a similar uplift to the P.H. grant to that received by the N.H.S.; rather than a reduction of 3.9% in real terms per year.
- implement the A.C.R.A. funding formula to redistribute the Public Health Grant based on the needs of the population

Yours sincerely



Councillor Tudor Evans OBE
Leader of Plymouth City Council



Councillor Ian Tuffin
Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Social Care