



Department
of Health

*Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2NS*

Tel: 020 7210 4850



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

16th October 2015

Dear Health and Wellbeing Board Chairs,

Better Care Fund 2016-17

The Better Care Fund has achieved the most ambitious ever pooling of budgets across health and social care in every area of England. Local leaders and clinical experts have worked alongside each other to plan and commission joined-up services across all aspects of the local health and care economy. This coordinated way of working is helping areas deliver services that better fit the needs of local populations, as well as ensuring that the most is made of the resources available.

We are starting to see real differences to how services are provided on the ground, and the Government considers the Better Care Fund to be a key tool in driving the integration of health and social care services. We would like to express our thanks to all those who have been involved in delivering this progress.

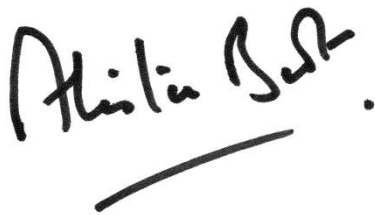
We are therefore pleased to confirm our decision to continue the Better Care Fund into the 2016-17 financial year, as set out in a recent Written Ministerial Statement. A letter from national NHS bodies confirming the same is expected to be issued shortly. The local flexibility to pool more than the mandatory amount will remain; however, detail about the minimum size of the Fund will not be confirmed until after the Spending Review reports on 25 November, when we will also have greater clarity on the policy framework that will underpin the Better Care Fund next year. Nevertheless, confirmation that the Fund will continue next year should allow you to start planning for 2016-17.

Although the timing of the Spending Review means that the formal planning process for 2016-17 will need to wait until the end of the year, there are some actions you

will want to start considering with your Better Care Fund partners over the coming months. Chief among these is an honest evaluation of your Better Care Fund implementation to date – including what has worked, what has not worked as anticipated, and what could be adjusted, refined or changed moving forward. The Better Care Support Team will be disseminating tools to help you in this evaluation.

As soon as further information becomes available it will be communicated to you. In the meantime, please do get in touch with the Better Care Support Team via england.bettercaresupport@nhs.net if you would like to discuss this further.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alistair Burt". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

ALISTAIR BURT

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marcus Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style.

MARCUS JONES