



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

39 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0EU

Our ref: TO-1166336

Tel: 020 7210 4850

Mr Damian Eaton  
CSS Manager (Legal and Democratic Services)  
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council  
Town Hall  
Stockport SK1 3XE

06 MAR 2019

Dear Mr Eaton,

Thank you for your correspondence of 6 February to Matt Hancock about early intervention and prevention in public health. I have been asked to reply.

I note your concerns.

The Government fully appreciates the importance of protecting and improving public health. It also believes that reducing the deficit and promoting economic growth is vital to the long-term health of the economy and to all of the public services that it supports. Ministers recognise that the funding position for local government is extremely challenging, and understand the huge efforts that local government has made to focus on securing best value from every pound spent.

The 2015 Spending Review made available £16billion of funding for local authorities (LAs) in England over the five-year period. This is in addition to what the NHS spends on prevention, including over £1billion on immunisation, vaccination and screening and £340million on vaccine stocks in 2016/17, and the world's first national diabetes prevention programme.

The transfer to LAs provided the opportunity to join public health with decisions on other local services, such as housing and economic regeneration, to improve the overall health of the local population.

Whilst working within the conditions and regulations of the grant, it is for LAs to determine how best to invest these resources. The Department expects LAs to focus on securing value for money and to challenge the way services have historically been delivered.

Many councils have redesigned services, taking a holistic approach, and are demonstrating real innovation. LAs will decide their own spending, based on assessment of local need, and many local councils are re-tendering contracts and achieving better value for money than in the past.

Ministers believe that LAs are best placed to make decisions about services that best meet the needs of their populations. Ministers see LAs commissioning different kinds of public health services that better fit local circumstances and priorities, and that deliver improved value.

As you are aware, a new public health formula was developed by the Advisory Committee on Resource Allocation. This formula was the subject of formal consultation in 2015. The new public health formula has a number of significant advantages in analytical robustness, the use of contemporary data, and objectivity. The Department of Health and Social Care and Public Health England are continuing work to ensure that the public health formula is up-to-date, and are assessing the suitability of the new formula for use under any new funding arrangements.

I hope this reply is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kathy O'Rourke', written over a horizontal line.

Kathy O'Rourke  
Ministerial Correspondence and Public Enquiries