



Health and Social Care Committee

House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

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From Steve Brine MP

Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

13 December 2022

Dear Steve

On 14 November, I wrote to you, formally inviting you to give oral evidence to the Health and Social Care Select Committee and asking you to supply dates in December when you were available. In the intervening month, numerous other Secretaries of State have appeared before their Select Committee to give updates on the work of their Departments. I'm disappointed that, in this time, we haven't even received a reply to our letter. I'm sure you will agree with me that it is important that Ministers engage with the House and its Committees in a timely and effective way. There are many pressing and urgent matters which the Committee wishes to discuss with you. May I ask you to please supply us, at the earliest opportunity, with dates on which you are available to give evidence to us?

We are also waiting for reply to several other letters we sent during November, including a letter asking when we could expect the responses to our reports on:

- NHS Litigation reform (overdue since 28 June)
- Workforce: recruitment, training and retention in health and social care (overdue since 25 September)
- The impact of body image on mental and physical health (overdue since 2 October)

Sir Bernard Jenkin, as Chair of the Liaison Committee, wrote to the then Leader of the House earlier this year about the importance of the Government responding to Select Committee reports in a timely way. The Leader of the House wrote back to say: I would...like to take this opportunity to reiterate the government's commitment to providing responses to committee reports within two months. There may be instances where this is not possible but I would expect departments to engage closely with committees in these instances." May I therefore urgently ask for information on when the Committee can expect these three outstanding response?

There are two further pieces of correspondence on which we have had no response: a letter from 8 November asking about the 10-year cancer plan and a letter from 29 November asking for more information about independent workforce planning. In order

for Select Committees to be able effectively to hold the Government to account, it is necessary to receive timely responses to queries.

In another recent instance, information has been supplied to the Committee at extremely late notice. The Committee today held a one-off oral evidence session on the follow up to the First Do No Harm report. The Government was due to publish an update to its response to this report in July, nearly 5 months ago. The update was eventually delivered to us at 6pm the night before today's 10am evidence session. That is just over 12 hours' notice. It is discourteous to the Committee to get this information to us at the very last minute in this way.

I really hope that we can work positively together in future.

Yours sincerely,



Steve Brine MP
Chair, Health and Social Care Committee