



Northern
Ireland
Office

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1 2HQ

Stormont House
Belfast
BT4 3SH

E sos.lewis@nio.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/nio

Follow us on Twitter @NIOgov

Simon Hoare MP
Chair, Northern Ireland Affairs Committee
Committee Office
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

20 March 2020

UKG Response to NIAC Report on Health Funding

Dear Simon,

I welcome this report from the Committee which usefully shines a light on key issues facing health and social care provision in Northern Ireland.

I note the content of your report and the recommendations for the Department of Health and the UK Government. Now that the NI Executive has been restored, it will be for the Executive's health minister to consider how best to take forward the recommendations on these devolved issues.

However, the Committee raised two recommendations to which I, as Secretary of State, would still like to respond. My response to each of these is provided below.

I greatly appreciate the work of the Committee in reviewing the key funding issues affecting health and social care provision in Northern Ireland. I look forward to the NI Assembly making decisions to ensure the transformation and effective delivery of these vital services for the people of Northern Ireland.

I look forward to continuing to engage fully and constructively with the Committee in the months ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brandon', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

RT HON BRANDON LEWIS CBE MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

UKG Response to NIAC Report on Health Funding

Recommendation 1

If an Executive is not in place by the end of this year, the UK Government should work with the Department of Health and the Department of Finance to secure a multi-year funding settlement ring-fenced for transformation.

The UK Government fully supports the transformation of health and social care in Northern Ireland and has provided £200m over the last two years to progress its delivery. As part of the New Decade, New Approach Agreement, the UK Government has provided around £245m to support the transformation of public services, including health and social care.

As Secretary of State, I do not have the authority to direct spend on devolved matters.

Recommendation 2

Following consultation between the Department of Health, the HSC Trusts and the community and voluntary sectors to determine budget priorities, the UK Government should work with the Department of Health and the Department of Finance to produce three-year minimum budget allocations. This should be implemented from the next budget.

I recognise the concerns highlighted in the Committee's report relating to the annual commissioning and budgetary cycle. The report's findings are clear that long-term financial planning and commissioning would support long-term strategic planning and service transformation.

The Northern Ireland budget is a devolved matter for which the Department of Finance has responsibility. I have no power to direct how the NI Civil Service Departments allocate their funding.

It is a matter for the NI Executive to consider allocations for the Department of Health.