



Department
of Health &
Social Care

*From the Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care*

The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP,
House of Commons,
London,
SW1A 0AA

Dear Jeremy,

07 April 2021

Thank you for your letter dated 26 March, following my appearance before the Committee. As always, I found the Committee's questions and insights on the Health and Care Bill extremely valuable, and I look forward to reading the report that emerges from your inquiry.

Barbara Keeley raised the issue of unpaid carers and the need to strengthen their rights through this Bill. Unpaid carers play an essential role in ensuring the health and wellbeing of others and they are a highly significant contributor to the wider care system.

Your letter raised a number of important questions about the role and representation of carers in the new structure we are proposing. I have instructed my officials to examine these in detail, to consult further with Carers UK and other carers organisations and to see what more we can do. I also believe some of the points you and Barbara have raised can be addressed most directly and effectively through guidance.

As I said to the Committee, I believe this is an area where there would be great value in Ministers and the Committee working together. To that end, I have suggested to Helen Whately, Minister for Social Care, that she meets as soon as possible with you to discuss how we can take this forward.

This Bill is of course just one part of the Government's overall approach to sustainable improvement of the adult social care system. As you know, we will be bringing forward a wider set of proposals this year, which I look forward to discussing in detail with you and the Committee.

Thank you for following up with me about this important matter.

Yours ever,

MATT HANCOCK



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From Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP

26 March 2021

Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

Sent by email

Dear Matt

Thank you for coming before my Committee to discuss your proposals for the forthcoming Health and Care Bill. We covered a lot of ground in that session but given the time pressures on all of us, it was not possible to cover everything that Committee Members wished to raise in sufficient detail.

One of those issues was the rights of unpaid carers, which Barbara Keely touched on (Question 179). In your response to Barbara, you took on board her concerns and said that it was something that we could all work on to improve the legislation. I am therefore following this matter up on Barbara's behalf.

It would greatly assist our work if you could write to the Committee setting out what plans your Department has to include in the Bill, provisions to strengthen the rights of unpaid carers and to ensure that they are consulted as part of health and care planning. In particular, it would be helpful if that response could answer the following questions:

- What duties will be placed on ICSs, NHS England and your Department to consult carers specifically as a group.
- Whether the Bill will include a requirement to include representatives of carers on the boards of ICSs and Health and Partnership Boards.
- What protections will be included in the Bill in relation to carers' rights at the point of hospital discharge; and what guidance will be issued on this to carers.
- Whether the Bill will create a new responsibility on the NHS to have regard to carers and to promote their health and wellbeing.

My Committee will need to publish its Report on the White Paper before the Bill is introduced in the new Parliamentary session. I would therefore be grateful if you could provide a response to this letter by Friday 2 April.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
Chair, Health and Social Care Committee