



Department
of Health &
Social Care

*From the Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care*

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13th August 2021

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of 20 July regarding the Parliamentary Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) and the Health and Care Bill.

I appreciate your continued concern for the important role the PHSO plays in managing patient complaints and your efforts to address issues relating to its ability to function effectively. It is of the utmost importance that we have a well-functioning framework for managing complaints against the NHS and Government Departments. It is also important that the PHSO continues to be able to carry out this role effectively as the health and care system evolves.

I would like to reassure you and the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC) that we remain committed to supporting the work of the PHSO on the NHS complaints standards project. The department is working with the PHSO to support and evaluate pilots into their complaint standards framework and we would be happy to update PACAC on any work the department undertakes as a result of those pilots.

I remain committed to maintaining a robust safe space policy and believe this is integral to the success of the Health Services Safety Investigations Body (HSSIB). It is for this reason that the Bill protects safe space as much as possible. The option to amend secondary legislation exists so that we can adapt our approach should the need arise and as we learn from the implementation of safe space. We remain committed to monitoring the impact that safe space provisions have on PHSO's ability to carry out its functions and aim to report back to the committee within twelve months of the Bill gaining Royal Assent as the new body enters its establishment phase. We will continue to engage with the PHSO on this matter.

I understand your wish to see broader reform of the legislation underpinning the operation Ombudsman services. The work reforming Ombudsman arrangements have currently been paused and will require significant legislative time. However, the Government is considering how it can reform Ombudsman arrangements for the United Kingdom and England.

My officials will continue to monitor the impact of safe space provision on effective working between HSSIB and PHSO as the Bill progresses through Parliament.

Thank you once again for your engagement on this important issue.

Yours ever,

RT HON SAJID JAVID MP