

Rt Hon David Cameron MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

13th May 2015

Dear Prime Minister,

Thank you for your letter of 28 April 2015 and congratulations on your successful return to office.

The 115 patient-related and 16 corporate members of the Specialised Healthcare Alliance strongly welcomed your commitment to high quality specialised healthcare and to increasing health spending overall by a minimum of £8 billion in this parliament.

In seeking high quality, equitable specialised care across England, members of the Specialised Healthcare Alliance stand ready to work constructively with your Ministerial team and NHS England to maximise the benefits of the current commissioning system.

The Alliance has been a strong supporter of national commissioning for specialised services, as brought about by the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Historically, local commissioning of specialised services engendered highly variable access and service standards across the country. Under NHS England's national commissioning, patients and their families now enjoy important certainty in these matters.

For all that, the Alliance recognises that there are weaknesses that need to be addressed, not least in bringing about better integration between local and specialised services through enhanced collaboration between the two. As our members' earlier letter to you made clear, however, there are concerns within the patient community that collaborative commissioning for specialised services risks a return to the varied provision of the past.

Accordingly, the Alliance stands ready to work closely with the Department of Health and colleagues from NHS England to secure the best possible outcomes from the current commissioning system. In particular, we wholeheartedly support NHS England's guidance on collaborative commissioning in its commitment to national standards, policies and specifications as part of arrangements that cover the population as a whole, which provides a litmus test for the future.

On that score, an important milestone for specialised care in the coming months will be the Alliance's biennial conference on Tuesday 14th July. We are liaising with the Department of Health and very much hope a Minister will be able to join us to set

out the government's vision for specialised services in the new parliament.

Specialised services are vital to the many patients who need them but also of strategic importance in determining whether the NHS remains in the vanguard of global medicine. Your support for our shared aims is therefore doubly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'John Murray', followed by a period.

John Murray
Director

cc: Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
Alistair Burt MP
Ben Gummer MP
Jane Ellison MP
George Freeman MP