



Department
of Health

*From the Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
Secretary of State for Health*

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Dear Colleague,

- 4 NOV 2013

I would like to take the opportunity to inform you of work being done nationally to improve end of life care services and to highlight the importance of ensuring that people throughout the country have access to high quality services at the end of life.

As I am sure you are aware, the Government has specifically highlighted the importance of end of life care in the Mandate to NHS England. End of life care also features in the NHS Outcomes Framework and the updated NHS Constitution. However, whilst significant progress has been made in recent years to improve end of life care services, there is still much more work to do to ensure that people are receiving the highest standards of care at the end of life.

As part of this work, NHS England is currently undertaking a review and refocus of the End of Life Care Strategy, which is due to be completed in early 2014. Alongside this, the Leadership Alliance for the Care of Dying People, under the chairmanship of the National Clinical Director for End of Life Care, Dr Bee Wee, is working to set out the principles of good end of life care and to formulate a system-wide response to the Independent Review of the Liverpool Care Pathway, which was published in July.

NHS England is also undertaking work to develop a fairer, per-patient funding system for palliative care. The eight funding pilots we set up following the report of the independent Palliative Care Funding Review are due to complete in April 2014, with the aim of setting up a new funding system by 2015.

I am keen to ensure that the progress and momentum achieved in recent years in implementing the end of life care strategy is maintained. Health and Wellbeing Boards, as leaders in the local health and care system, are uniquely placed to contribute as part of a joined-up approach to improving care, informed by work being done nationally.

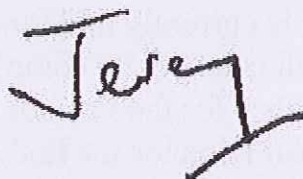
I am therefore keen to support Health and Wellbeing Boards in ensuring that locally-owned processes to develop Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies fully consider end of life services; that the views and experiences of patients and families are fully and appropriately considered in the development process; and the commissioning and planning of local services is joined up with the work being done to improve these services at a national level.

As you will be aware, the Department has produced statutory guidance on JSNAs and JHWSs. We are also funding the Local Government Association and others to develop further resources to support the development of JSNAs, as well as support for local and national Healthwatch on patient and public engagement.

<https://knowledgehub.local.gov.uk>

I know you will share my desire to see end of life care services continue to improve across the country. The work of Health and Wellbeing Boards is central to this goal and I believe that by ensuring local work on end of life care is joined up with, and informed by work being done nationally, we will make progress together towards improving the provision of end of life care and the experiences of patients and families.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeremy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

JEREMY HUNT