



DH Gateway Reference: 5396

To: Chairs of Local Strategic Partnerships
Chief Executives of Local Authorities,
Chief Executives of Strategic Health Authorities

Cc: Chief Executives of Primary Care Trusts,
Directors of Government Offices of the Regions
Government Office Regeneration Directors
Regional Directors of Public Health
Other partners in Children's Trust arrangements
Local Government Association

8 September 2005

Dear Colleague,

YOUR HEALTH, YOUR CARE, YOUR SAY

You will be aware that earlier in the summer we announced plans to hold a major listening exercise, "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say" to inform the development of a White Paper on community health and social care services. The White Paper will include the follow-up to the consultation on the adult social care Green Paper, "Independence, Well Being and Choice".

A large scale listening exercise is taking place during the autumn. Opinion Leader Research has been recruited to organise a number of regional public engagement events and a national event at the end of October. They have also worked with the Department of Health to develop a resource kit which is available to organisations interested in running local listening events at www.yoursayresources.nhs.uk.

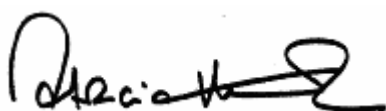
We are keen to ensure that as many people as possible who use and deliver health and social care services should have an opportunity to express their views on the future shape of services. Local organisations will be vital to this process, and we are writing to encourage you to think about your involvement, and about events you can hold locally. These events offer an excellent opportunity to build on the existing good work local areas are involved in and to gather views on how local people want local services to serve them best. The process will feed into development of policy for the White Paper and should also provide valuable data which will add to local Community Strategies and Local Area Agreement negotiations.



Many areas face real challenges in reducing health inequalities, including issues around how some groups access health and health-promoting services in some deprived areas. It is important that all sections of the community are engaged, represented and heard, and that the planning for local activity takes place jointly across health and social care organisations. We recognise that local partners may decide to take different approaches in allocating responsibilities for developing and leading events. The experience of LSPs in building consultation and dialogue with local communities means that in many instances they will be well-placed to bring together local partners, in particular PCTs, SHAs, Local Authorities (social care, housing, leisure and other relevant services), other Children's Trust partners, and local voluntary and community organisations, to agree the local approach.

The outcomes from the local and the regional events will feed into a large scale national event on 29 October, and will support the formulation of policy for the White Paper. This is an important opportunity to involve local people in decisions which will affect the shape of key services which offer everyday support. We hope you will be keen to seize the initiative and to work with us on this. We anticipate that this could be largely undertaken through existing or developing consultation mechanisms so that costs can be kept to a minimum. A resource pack to facilitate local deliberation is available for event organisers, but there is no central funding.

Copies of this letter go to Chief Executives of Primary Care Trusts, Regional Directors of Government Offices of the Regions and Regional Directors of Public Health, and other partners in Children's Trust arrangements. A copy also goes to Sandy Bruce-Lockhart of LGA.



PATRICIA HEWITT

**SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR HEALTH**



DAVID MILIBAND

**MINISTER OF
COMMUNITIES
AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

