

Universal Credit: Prevention of Ill Health: Government Vision

Sarah Wollaston Chair, Health and Social Care Committee, Chair, Liaison Committee (Commons)

In the Secretary of State's vision for prevention he rightly points out that Â£14 of social benefit accrues from every Â£1 spent in public health. Therefore it is going to be much more challenging for him to deliver on his objectives if there is a further transfer from the public health budgets into NHS England budgets. However, I recognise that this requires action across all Departments, so will he set out what he is going to do to encourage cross-government action on physical activity, because we all know that that is a vital part of public health and prevention?

Matthew Hancock Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

I agree with my hon. Friend the Chair of the Select Committee on that. Of course, the public health budgets for local authorities and Public Health England will be settled as part of the spending review, and there was no change to them in the Budget last week. There are also much wider responsibilities on activityâ€”on cycling and walkingâ€”on which I am working with the Department for Transport. The document is all about the cross-government action, and the NHS will come forward with its long-term plan for the NHS-specific action. If there are aspects of cross-departmental working that she suggests we have not yet taken up, I will be looking forward to listening to her on that.

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