



Royal College of
General Practitioners

**Dr Clare Gerada MBE FRCP FRCGP FRCPsych
Chair of Council**

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

6 March 2012

Dear Mr Cameron

We both share a passion for the NHS and we all want to find a way of improving it. We have common ground: we've long said that we want a clinically led, professionally managed health service. The College has welcomed the Government's commitment to placing GPs at the heart of decision-making. We also share a priority to reduce health inequalities. As you know, we continue to believe that the Health and Social Care Bill risks leading to negative outcomes, and retain our belief that cost effective improvements could have been achieved without the need for structural change. However, the last 18 months have polarised the debate and we feel it is now the time to restate our similarities rather than continuously focus on our differences.

While the College's position on the Health and Social Care Bill remains consistent, the truth of the matter is that whatever the outcome, it will be our 34,000 members in England who will be working hard to make it operable and who will be addressing the health needs of patients and communities.

I am therefore writing to you in the hope that we can find an acceptable way forward in which the Royal College of General Practitioners is able to work with the Government towards the future stability of the NHS in England and where we can help you find a way through the tensions to achieve a better health service for our patients.

We believe that this should include our involvement in discussions concerning the key regulations implementing Bill, for example under Clause 73 on procurement, patient choice and competition, and that these should also be subject to the affirmative procedure. In addition, we would seek the opportunity to input fully into the formulation of the NHS Mandate, given the critical role that this will play in establishing the framework within which the NHS Commissioning Board will operate.

We do have thoughts on the future of the NHS and have communicated some of these to you. Broadly speaking we feel that provider reforms, focusing on GP-led integrated care and developing federated primary care organisations is the way forward to deal with the big public health problems facing us. We also have evidence to show that the future stability of the NHS in England and the UK depends on getting more GPs, with longer training, spending more time with their patients.

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Though we do not agree on the need for, and potential impacts of, parts of the proposed legislation, I assure you that our mutual concern remains providing and planning the best possible quality of care to our patients. I hope you will consider the wealth of experience that the RCGP represents, and will look at ways for us to work together to make the health service secure, stable, and safe, now and in the future.

We hope that, at the right time, you would feel able to meet to consider how the College can contribute to the issues we have in common.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Clare Gerada', with a period at the end.

Dr Clare Gerada
Chair of Council

cc: Rt Hon Andrew Lansley, Secretary of State for Health
Mr Paul Bate, Senior Policy Adviser, Health & Adult Care