



Department  
of Health

*From David Mowat MP  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Community Health and Care*

*Richmond House  
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POC 1054406

Nick Carter  
Chief Executive  
West Berkshire Council  
Council Offices  
Market Street  
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RG14 5LD

12<sup>th</sup> October 2016

Dear Nick,

In August 2015, the Secretary of State withdrew his decision not to award West Berkshire and Wokingham additional funding to implement the national eligibility criteria for access to adult social care, and agreed to make a fresh decision.

The Secretary of State agreed to work with the councils to develop a process to assess any additional impact on West Berkshire and Wokingham of the Care and Support (Eligibility Criteria) Regulations 2015 and to fund independent research to review what any such impact might be. Northumberland, as the only other council who previously set its local criteria at “critical”, was invited to take part in the research. The specification for the research was agreed by the Department and officials. The final reports from the quantitative and qualitative studies were presented to the Department and the councils in January 2016. The three councils also provided additional information on their experience of implementing the national eligibility criteria.

The Secretary of State and I have carefully considered the evidence available from the research and the information provided by the councils.

The quantitative research suggests that the number of adults with eligible needs reduced in two of the three councils, and that expenditure increased slightly in these two councils. The third council showed an increase in adults with eligible needs and in expenditure.

The research concluded that “the analysis could not disentangle which factor or factors is responsible for the observed changes in the numbers of clients and levels of expenditure in the three authorities, and most importantly to determine whether and to what extent the changes are linked specifically to the eligibility regulations”.

The evidence does not establish that the national eligibility criteria resulted in a burden on these councils.

Particular account was taken of the additional information provided by the councils and the assertion that efficiencies elsewhere masked the actual impact on West Berkshire and Wokingham. This was considered by analysts in the Department and their analysis showed that the level of efficiencies claimed by the councils is in line with the efficiencies they would have needed to achieve in previous years.

Therefore, the case for a new burden on the councils has not been established. Accordingly, we have decided that no additional funding should be awarded. I recognise that this will come as a disappointing outcome to this process but the evidence does not support the claim that the national eligibility criteria has resulted in a new burden.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Mowat". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'D' and a long horizontal line underneath the name.

**DAVID MOWAT**