

*From Paul Burstow MP  
Minister of State for Care Services*



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Sir Michael Scholar KCB  
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*Dear Sir Michael*

Thank you for your letter of 22 December to Andrew Lansley enclosing a report by the UK Statistics Authority reviewing the NHS Information Centre's (IC) decision to discontinue the statistical data collections for people registered as deaf or hard of hearing, and of grant funded services. I am replying as the Minister responsible for audiology services policy.

I am pleased that the review acknowledges that these decisions were taken after consultation with users and service providers and that the NHS IC was responsive to the views expressed in the course of the consultation.

Your report recommends that the NHS IC review with users its broader statistical needs for understanding the health and social care issues of people with hearing impairment, and also investigate other data sources to support these uses. On these issues, there have already been discussions between officials in the Department of Health and the NHS IC.

I understand from the NHS IC that further work in this area will be picked up alongside other topics through the next stages of the 'Zero Based Review' (ZBR), where the equalities and classifications workstream has considered potential requirements for sensory impaired people.

The ZBR is an opportunity to take a strategic overview of social care information, to describe what should be collected to support shared goals and to promote transparency and public scrutiny of outcomes. The resulting dataset will support the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework, policy development and assurance, sector-led improvement, local benchmarking and self-assessment.

I hope this reply is helpful.

Yours sincerely



**PAUL BURSTOW**