



Health Committee

House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

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From Dr Sarah Wollaston MP, Chair

4 April 2017

Dear Chair,

As you may be aware, the House of Commons Health Committee has recently concluded an inquiry into suicide prevention. The Committee's [final report](#) was published on 16 March.

In our report, we welcomed the fact that 95 per cent of local authorities have a suicide prevention plan in place or in development. However we were concerned that there is no detail about the quality of the plans or about how effectively they are being implemented.

We noted that there is a role for local scrutiny of implementation of suicide prevention plans in the first instance and we considered that this local scrutiny could be a role for health overview and scrutiny committees within local authorities. Local scrutiny does not diminish the need for national oversight, which will be better placed to take a broad perspective of where plans are working, which plans are being implemented effectively, and which local authorities may need more support. We recommended the creation of a national implementation board to serve that purpose. Nevertheless, we consider that local scrutiny is essential for ensuring effective implementation and health overview and scrutiny committees in local authorities are well-placed to perform this important function.

Our recommendation to the Government is as follows: **We recommend that health overview and scrutiny committees should also be involved in ensuring effective implementation of local authorities' plans. This should be established as a key role of these committees. Effective local scrutiny of a local authority's suicide prevention plan should reduce or eliminate the need for intervention by the national implementation board.**

I wanted to draw your attention to the Committee's report, and specifically to the recommendation to the Government that effective implementation of the suicide prevention plan in local areas should be a key role of health overview and scrutiny committees. It may be that you are already carrying out this role and if so I hope you will forgive this letter and read it instead as thanking you for already doing so.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Sarah Wollaston MP
Chair of the Committee