



Department
of Health &
Social Care

*From the Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care*

*39 Victoria Street
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19 October 2023

Dear colleague,

On 24 March 2023, I wrote to the Department of Health and Social Care's agencies and partner organisations setting out how we should ensure good value for money when it comes to improving diversity and inclusion (DE&I) across the health family.

This included explaining that these issues are everyone's responsibility and should be addressed through normal management processes rather than using external providers or dedicated roles within organisations.

In the Department, we have been focused on delivering efficiency so that we can move resources from the back office to the frontline. This has included reducing headcount (FTE) by one in six, and we have no standalone diversity roles. Much of this efficiency has been delivered by applying a recruitment freeze. Other parts of the health family, including NHS England, are also making progress on this.

I am therefore concerned that many local NHS organisations are actively recruiting into dedicated DE&I roles. Current live adverts include jobs with salaries of up to £96,376, which is above the basic full-time pay for a newly promoted consultant. There are also examples of continued use of subscriptions to external organisations on DE&I issues. I do not consider that this represents value for money, even more so at a time when budgets are under pressure as we work to tackle the backlog left by the pandemic.

I believe that we should devolve more to integrated care systems. Therefore, as you are responsible for managing a significant proportion of the NHS budget at a local level, I wanted to ensure that you are taking a similar approach to the Department to secure value for money.

I would appreciate it if you could work with NHS organisations in your area to review with a view to ceasing recruitment into standalone DE&I roles and external subscriptions to redirect these resources into frontline patient care.

Should organisations wish to take a different path then they should be willing to justify in public why such roles add more value than additional medical or healthcare staff.

I also subscribe to the definition of diversity set out in the Civil Service D&I Strategy (available on GOV.UK) and believe that this is the approach we should adopt in delivering inclusion for all our people.

Yours ever,

**RT HON STEVE BARCLAY MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**