Dear Mr Javid, Mr Hancock and Mr Jenrick,

Public Health Investment

As council leaders, we are writing to you on behalf of the millions of citizens that we represent, urging you to provide increased and sustainable funding for public health. This is vital if we are to work together to prevent ill health, reduce health inequalities and support a sustainable health and social care system. Community health engagement is also vital to the delivery of the NHS Long Term Plan as it is these interventions which will help keep people out of hospital and save the state money.

In 2018/19 and 2019/20 every local authority will have less to spend on public health than the year before. Councils are now responsible for delivering most public health services, but our ability to do so is increasingly compromised by ongoing public health grant reductions and the broader funding climate for local government.

Given that we know around four in ten cancers are preventable - largely through reducing avoidable risk factors, such as stopping smoking, keeping a healthy weight and cutting back on alcohol - reducing public health funding is a false economy. Smoking, obesity and alcohol account for 80,000, 30,000 and 7,000 early deaths each year respectively. Smoking remains the single biggest cause of preventable cancer in the world. Furthermore, smoking-related ill health costs our local authorities £760 million every year in social care costs. On average, for every £1 spent on smoking cessation, £10 is saved in future health costs.

Reducing investment in public health puts undue demand on local health services and our economy suffers too. Poor public health costs local businesses heavily through sick days and lost productivity. Unless we restore public health funding, our health and care system will remain locked in a ‘treatment’ approach, which is neither economically viable nor protects the health of our residents.

We welcome the Government’s recent commitment to preventing ill health - including setting an ambitious target of a smoke-free country by 2030 in the recent Prevention Green Paper. However, we know a sustainable NHS cannot be achieved if undermined by these local cuts. Public health must be seen as an essential component of a healthy society – it therefore deserves parity of funding and of esteem. That’s why we are coming together and calling on you to deliver a sustainable funding solution, for the health, wealth and wellbeing of our communities.
We look forward to hearing from you soon.

The undersigned council leaders:

Cllr Darren Rodwell, Leader of Barking and Dagenham Council
Cllr Ian Ward, Leader of Birmingham City Council
Cllr Muhammed Butt, Leader of Brent Council
Cllr Nancy Platt, Leader of Brighton and Hove City Council
Mayor Marvin Rees, Mayor of Bristol
Cllr David Jones, Leader of Bury Council
Cllr Georgia Gould, Leader of Camden Council
Cllr Louise Gittens, Leader of Cheshire West and Chester Council
Cllr Keith Aspden, Leader of City of York Council
Cllr Adam Paynter, Leader of Cornwall Council
Cllr Stewart Young, Leader of Cumbria County Council
Cllr Heather Scott, Leader of Darlington Borough Council
Cllr Barry Lewis, Leader of Derbyshire County Council
Cllr John Hart, Leader of Devon County Council
Mayor Ros Jones, Mayor of Doncaster
Cllr Simon Henig, Leader of Durham County Council
Cllr Nesil Caliskan, Leader of Enfield Council
Cllr Rob Polhill, Leader of Halton Borough Council
Cllr Roy Perry, Leader of Hampshire County Council
Cllr Graham Henson, Leader of Harrow Council
Cllr David Williams, Leader of Hertfordshire Council
Cllr Steve Brady, Leader of Hull City Council
Cllr Robert Francis, Leader of Isles of Scilly Council
Cllr Graham Morgan, Leader of Knowsley Council
Cllr Jack Hopkins, Leader of Lambeth Council
Sir Peter Soulsby, Mayor of Leicester
Mayor Damien Egan, Mayor of Lewisham
Mayor Joe Anderson, Mayor of Liverpool
Cllr Steve Curran, Leader of London Borough of Hounslow
Cllr Gareth Roberts, Leader of London Borough of Richmond upon Thames
Sir Richard Leese, Leader of Manchester City Council
Cllr Stephen Alambritis, Leader of Merton Council
Cllr Pete Marland, Leader of Milton Keynes Council
Cllr Nick Forbes, Leader of Newcastle City Council
Cllr Andrew Proctor, Leader of Norfolk County Council
Cllr Don Davies, Leader of North Somerset Council
Cllr David Mellen, Leader of Nottingham City Council
Cllr Sean Fielding, Leader of Oldham Council
Cllr Ian Hudspeth, Leader of Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Tudor Evans, Leader of Plymouth City Council
Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson, Leader of Portsmouth City Council
Cllr Chris Read, Leader of Rotherham Borough Council
Cllr Danny Thorpe, Leader of Royal Borough of Greenwich
Mayor Paul Dennett, Mayor of Salford
Cllr Julie Dore, Leader of Sheffield City Council
Cllr Peter Nutting, Leader of Shropshire Council
Cllr James Swindlehurst, Leader of Slough Borough Council
Cllr David Fothergill, Leader of Somerset County Council
Cllr Toby Savage, Leader of South Gloucestershire Council
Cllr Iain Malcolm, Leader of South Tyneside Council
Cllr Elise Wilson, Leader of Stockport Council
Cllr Tim Oliver, Leader of Surrey County Council
Cllr Brenda Warrington, Leader of Tameside Council
Cllr Shaun Davies, Leader of Telford and Wrekin Council
Cllr Steve Darling, Leader of Torbay Council
Mayor John Biggs, Mayor of Tower Hamlets
Cllr Andrew Western, Leader of Trafford Council
Cllr Clare Coghill, Leader of Waltham Forest Council
Cllr Louise Goldsmith, Leader of West Sussex County Council
Baroness Jane Scott, Leader of Wiltshire Council