

PORTNER AND JASKEL
SOLICITORS

Our ref DKE /PMH/

Your ref:

21 May 2001

The Rt. Honorable Alan Milburn MP
Secretary of State for Healthcare
Department of Health
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9:30 AM – 5:30 PM

**Please note it is essential
that you quote our full
reference on all
correspondence. Failure to
do so will result in delays
and the possible return of
the correspondence to you.**

Dear Mr Milburn

Re The Future Of The Community Health Council

I am a solicitor with 7 years experience of handling clinical negligence claims on behalf of claimants. I have been a member of the Law Society's Clinical Negligence Panel since 1998.

I am writing to give my support to the House of Lords proposed amendment to the Health and Social Care Bill.

While I dare say that the present Community Health Council's structure requires reform, it is my experience that the Community Health Councils have been operating very effectively to improve standards of healthcare within the NHS.

When I worked for Thomson, Snell and Passmore solicitors in Tunbridge Wells, I regularly attended Tunbridge Wells Community Health Council meetings, and it was apparent that their ward inspections and reports were very much instrumental in helping to maintain standards and improve all aspects of patient care. I personally have no doubt that their hard work has been reflected in the fact that recent reports demonstrate that Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust appears to be performing particularly well.

There seems to be little doubt amongst Community Health Councils that the Government's Health and Social Care Bill will destroy the excellent work the CHC's

have been involved in for so many years, whereas the House of Lords amendment seems to be an eminent and practical compromise.

I am therefore writing to add my voice to the concerns expressed by CHC's, and in view of their extensive experience, I would urge you to give every consideration to their views.

Yours sincerely

Diana Kettle

Portner and Jaskel

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