

Mr John Reid
Secretary of State for Health
Department of Health
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London SW1A 2NL

19 May 2004

Dear Minister,

RE: Free long-term care for dementia sufferers

I would like to bring to your attention the unfair predicament in which constituents of mine suffering from dementia find themselves. The Government artificially distinguishes 'personal' and 'nursing' care in such a way that patients' needs, like eating, dressing, washing and toileting - which result from the medical condition of dementia - are not provided for on the NHS.

Those suffering from dementia - most often older people - are thus forced to fund their own healthcare. It ought also to be pointed out that the Royal Commission on Long-term Care did recommend that personal care should be provided free of charge, but the Government rejected this recommendation.

I urge the Government to correct this unjust inconsistency and look forward to hearing how the Government plans to proceed on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Caroline Lucas MEP