

From: Dido Harding  
Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2017 12:36 pm  
Subject: NHS Improvement  
To: WOLLASTON, Sarah

Dear Sarah,

Thank you very much for your time on Thursday, and your advice. I have been reflecting over the last few days on how best to respond to the Health Select Committee's recommendations and wanted to let you know where I have got to.

As we discussed after the hearing, I completely agree that it's essential I build my knowledge and understanding of the health and social care sector. I will be out and about round the country as much as possible and will be listening hard to views far and wide. I will also be very mindful of my own personal healthcare choices going forward.

I thought hard about the discussion we had about my giving up the Conservative Whip. I do appreciate your's and the Committee's perspective but I have decided to retain the Whip. I think it is important to begin my tenure in the role of Chair of NHS Improvement being true to who I am. I think that pretending to be unaligned politically when I have been politically aligned all my adult life would not be being the honest and straightforward person I am. I do not see this as a political appointment and I will do my utmost to demonstrate that in all that I do in my role as Chair of NHS Improvement. There is considerable precedent for other Chair appointments both within and outside the health sector which have been done successfully in this way by individuals taking various party whips, and I will aim to follow that precedent by focusing on effectively executing my responsibilities in the role.

I appreciate this is not the answer you were hoping for, but hope that nonetheless you will respect what is a very difficult personal decision and that we will be able to work well together.

Many thanks and best wishes

Dido

Dido Harding  
Baroness Harding of Winscombe



# Health Committee

House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

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From Dr Sarah Wollaston MP, Chair

**Baroness Harding of Winscombe**  
**House of Lords**

6 November 2017

Dear Baroness Harding,

Thank you for your response to the recommendations we put forward in our report following the pre-appointment hearing for Chair of NHS Improvement. We discussed this as a Committee at our last meeting.

The Committee was happy to endorse your appointment for the role, and we look forward to building a constructive working relationship with you in the future.

We are pleased that you agree with our recommendation on the importance of building your knowledge and understanding of the health and social care sector.

It remains the Committee's position that in order to maintain the utmost confidence in your impartiality as Chair of NHS Improvement, it would be desirable for you to resign the Conservative whip in the House of Lords. We do not accept that resignation of the Conservative whip would amount to "pretending to be unaligned politically": we accept that you have been politically aligned all your adult life and stakeholders will be aware of that. Rather, resignation of the whip would be a practical demonstration that, for the duration of your appointment, you will not be taking instruction from any political party on the way in which you should vote on any issue before Parliament.

We note your contention that "there is considerable precedent for other Chair appointments both within and outside the health sector which have been done successfully in this way by individuals taking various party whips." We have in mind the recent example of Baroness Young of Old Scone, who we understand did not take the Labour whip for the duration of her appointment as Chair of the Care Quality Commission and sat as an unaffiliated peer.

We consider that evidence of your personal independence will be critically important to this role. We welcome your desire to demonstrate that independence in your work as NHS Improvement Chair, and we will be actively looking to ensure you maintain an evident commitment to this principle during your tenure.

Once again, congratulations on your appointment. We look forward to working closely with you in the coming months.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sarah Wollaston". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sarah" being more prominent than the last name "Wollaston".

**Dr Sarah Wollaston MP**  
**Chair of the Committee**