

Rt Hon Rachel Reeves MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

Friday November 21, 2025

Dear Chancellor,

RE: Call to adopt the Health for Wealth 2025 recommendations ahead of the Budget

As the [Northern Health Science Alliance \(NHSA\)](#) Council Members we are writing to urge you to take forward the recommendations set out in Health for Wealth 2025: Building a Healthier North to Boost UK Productivity report.

The NHSA is a strategic partnership across the North of England, uniting 11 research-intensive universities and nine leading NHS Trusts, serving a population of 16 million.

This latest analysis, led by [Health Equity North](#), provides compelling new evidence that poor health in the North is costing the UK economy an estimated £18.4 billion every year in lost productivity - a 13% rise since the original [Health for Wealth report in 2018](#). The North–South health divide is not only a matter of fairness; it is a major constraint on national economic growth.

Economic inactivity due to ill health is now 50% higher in the North than in the rest of England, and workers experiencing ill-health face wage losses nearly three times the national average. Without decisive intervention, this divide will continue to widen, undermining the Government’s mission to deliver sustainable, inclusive growth.

We have made a formal Budget submission based on the Health for Wealth 2025 evidence and recommendations, setting out a plan for improving health, tackling inequalities, and driving productivity across the North. We urge you to consider this submission in full as you finalise the forthcoming Budget.

The recommendations include:

1. **Implementing a cross-government Health Inequalities Strategy**, with funding weighted by need across health, education, skills, and housing, and measurable targets for healthy life expectancy, mental health, and wellbeing.

2. **Increasing and ring-fencing public health funding** in areas with the greatest need, reversing long-term underinvestment.
3. **Investing in mental health services and prevention programmes** across the North to reduce health-related economic inactivity and strengthen local economies.
4. **Supporting people with health problems to stay in and return to work**, recognising the North's business landscape and the prevalence of small and medium-sized enterprises.
5. **Empowering Combined Authorities** with long-term resources and responsibility for local, place-based health improvement strategies aligned with national goals.

The evidence is clear: health policy is economic policy. Every pound spent on prevention and improving public health generates a return of around £14 in wider social and economic benefits. By investing in health, we can unlock productivity, boost growth, and ensure prosperity across the whole country.

As part of this wider ambition, we wanted to share with you our aim to establish a new [Institute for Preventative Health Research \(IPHR\)](#) - a collaborative, national effort led from the North that brings together universities, NHS Trusts, local authorities, and industry partners to scale innovation in prevention. The Institute was backed by the Northern Metro Mayors at the Convention of the North earlier this year.

The IPHR aims to:

- Transform UK health outcomes by shifting to a prevention-led model of care;
- Deliver system-wide economic benefits through research and innovation;
- Set bold national missions, including adding five healthy years to UK life expectancy and reducing the health gap between socioeconomic groups by 30%;
- Launch a £100 million five-year pilot phase, leveraging existing NHSA infrastructure and networks across the North.

The IPHR provides a practical and powerful vehicle to realise the Government's ambition for a prevention-first approach and to advance OLS's mission of innovation-led transformation in health and care.

As you will be aware, there are disparities in R&D funding highlighted in our recent [UK Clinical Research Landscape report](#). For example, regions such as Tees Valley receive just £11.34 per capita in clinical research investment compared to £337.85 in

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Such disparities constrain both health outcomes and economic growth in the North.

Our recent convenings with Metro Mayors have generated practical, evidence-based policy solutions to address these inequalities. We believe the North's innovation ecosystem, supported by national partners such as the OLS, can play a transformative role in improving patient outcomes and driving sustainable, inclusive growth across the country.

The NHTA Council stands ready to work with you and your officials to ensure that the forthcoming Budget and the Government reflect this crucial link between health, innovation and wealth - and that the North can play its full part in powering the UK's economic renewal.

Yours sincerely,

**On behalf of the Northern Health Science Alliance Council
(Chief Executives of NHTA NHS Trusts and Deans of Medicine from northern universities)**

1. **Professor Joanne Atkinson**, Pro Vice-Chancellor for the Faculty of Health and Wellbeing, Northumbria University
2. **Professor Ashley Blom**, Vice-President and Dean of the Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health, The University of Manchester
3. **Professor Charlotte L. Clarke**, Associate Pro Vice Chancellor (Health), Durham University
4. **Professor Bernard Corfe**, Professor of Human Nutrition & Health, Newcastle University
5. **Professor StJohn Crean**, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & Enterprise), University of Lancashire
6. **Professor Stephen Cummings**, Pro Vice Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Exchange, Teesside University
7. **Hannah Davies**, Chief Executive, Northern Health Science Alliance and Executive Director, Health Equity North
8. **Jane Greenaway**, Associate Director of Research, University Hospital Tees (South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust)
9. **John Grinnell**, Chief Executive, Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust
10. **Professor Katie Highton**, Professor of Public Health & Wellbeing, Northumbria University

11. **Professor John Isaacs**, Director of Research, Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, and Professor of Rheumatology, Newcastle University
12. **Professor Mark Kearney**, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health, University of Leeds
13. **Professor Louise Kenny**, Board Chair of the NHSA and Executive Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the Faculty of Health & Life Sciences at the University of Liverpool
14. **Dr Kath Mackay**, Non-Executive Director, Northern Health Science Alliance
15. **Kirsten Major**, Chief Executive, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
16. **Professor Tracey Moore**, Vice President and Head of Faculty of Health, University of Sheffield
17. **Professor Ihtesham ur Rehman**, Head of Translational Research, University of Lancashire
18. **Professor Jo Rycroft-Malone OBE**, Executive Dean, Faculty of Health & Medicine, Lancaster University
19. **James Sumner**, Chief Executive, NHS University Hospitals of Liverpool Group
20. **Dr Ai Lyn Tan**, Medical Director - Research and Innovation, Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust
21. **Professor Sarah Thompson**, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research, University of York
22. **Professor Thozhukat Sathyapalan**, Research, Development and Innovation Director, Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust.