

Health Bill Committee Members
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Via email only.

A similar letter has also been sent to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and VODG members.

13 July 2026

Dear Bill Committee Members

I am writing on behalf of the Voluntary Organisation Disability Group (VODG), the membership body for disability charities, to express our concern, raised by many of our members, about the proposal in The Health Bill (NHS Modernisation Bill 2026) to remove mandatory local authority representatives on Integrated Care Boards (ICBs).

Disabled people, families and carers rely on joined-up, multi-disciplinary health, social care, education, housing and community support. The statutory involvement of local authorities in ICB decision-making has helped to strengthen collaboration and oversight across services, ensuring that local knowledge, social care expertise and wider determinants of health are reflected in planning and commissioning decisions.

We hope that, as the Bill progresses, careful consideration will be given to the impact of these reforms on the commissioning, continuity and delivery of care and support for disabled people, including during the transition from children and young people's services into adult provision. Many parts of the health and care system are already under considerable pressure, and further disruption to established partnership working could put the sustainability of services and the effective outcomes they deliver, at risk. Joint working and accountability between health, care and education will also be crucial to the success of the proposed SEND reforms, with the introduction of the local Experts at Hand service being a key example of where local authority and health commissioners will need to work in concert to ensure the successful delivery of this new health service to local schools.

There is concern by many across our membership that the removal of mandated local authority representation risks undermining integration at a time when many disabled people already face significant barriers to accessing coordinated, person-centred support. The proposal will also reduce local democratic accountability and diminish the voice of local communities in decisions that directly affect their health and wellbeing and is coming at a time of significant upheaval across the NHS and local government. Indeed, the provision seems incongruous with the government's ambitions for neighbourhood health and care.

We urge the Government to reconsider this proposal and retain a statutory role for local authorities on ICBs. Preserving strong partnerships between the NHS and local government



Voluntary Organisations Disability Group

is essential to improving outcomes, reducing inequalities and delivering genuinely integrated health, care and education systems that places a premium on prevention and well being.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these concerns further.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Rhidian Hughes | Chief Executive
Voluntary Organisations Disability Group (VODG)