I am a public health registrar currently working in local government. The move to local government has meant that public health spending is no longer ‘protected’ as part of the NHS spend, and the Chancellor plans to cut public health spending by £200m (7%) this year, with potentially more cuts to follow. Plans to cut public health spending will be disastrous for the NHS in the long run.

Our organisation is already reducing spend on frontline preventative health programmes around smoking, alcohol, mental health, obesity and sexual health – programmes with a proven evidence base which have been phenomenally successful over the last decade. Of the entire Health budget (including NHS spend), public health spending represents the best value for money in terms of the knock on beneficial impacts on health outcomes and healthcare costs. Therefore these short-sighted cuts are a false economy, which will increase pressure on the frontline NHS and widen health inequalities in the years ahead.

Further cuts to local authority spending – particularly in social care, will also lead to pressure on acute hospital beds. The main problem with discharging elderly populations in a timely and efficient manner is the lack of community beds and social care packages available in the community. With 30% cuts to local authorities planned, there will be massive cuts to social care, which will delay hospital discharges.

Furthermore, the government has failed to listen to academic evidence on the massive benefits that could be realised by introducing a sugar tax and minimum unit pricing of alcohol. No academic experts who actually work in academia or public health have any faith in the Government’s flagship ‘Public Health Responsibility Deal’ with Industry. Thus far, the Food and Drink Industry has failed to take this voluntary pledge seriously in any meaningful sense. It is costing lives and costing money.

This Government has shown disdain to experts in public health and the public health profession by failing to listen to repeated warnings from public health leaders from the Faculty of Public Health, the Medical Royal Colleges, the Kings Fund, the Nuffield Trust, the Health Foundation, to name but a few. Please listen to us.

14 December 2015