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Michael McGimpsey MLA
Health Minister
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
Belfast
BT4 3SQ

10 July 2008

Dear Minister,

AccessNI and delays in receipt of enhanced disclosures

I am writing further to my letter of 17th June 2008, in which UKHCA expressed concerns about the loss of potential recruits to homecare services following an announcement by AccessNI that it has increased the length of service standard time for Enhanced Disclosures from 4 weeks to 6-8 weeks over summer 2008.

We wrote to suggest that measures be put in place by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to enable providers to recruit staff pending receipt of an Enhanced Disclosure certificate and enclosed more information in a technical briefing.

Pending consideration of our proposal, I am writing to request that Ministerial direction is given to AccessNI to prioritise disclosure applications from domiciliary care providers to deal with the current challenge of sustaining adequate staffing levels in domiciliary care. During a meeting of Northern Ireland homecare providers last week, there was unanimous concern and dismay at the current delays.

We consider that there is an exceptional case to be made for enabling homecare providers to meet the demand for continuity of care in their communities and for prioritising the sector. The need to address the issue of staff shortages in the sector has been commented widely upon by the Comptroller and Auditor General, and the Public Accounts Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly, as noted in our technical briefing of 17th June 2008.



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UNITED KINGDOM HOME CARE ASSOCIATION LIMITED

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We hope that our suggestions will receive appropriate attention and consideration given the serious nature of the problems raised.

Yours sincerely,

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cc. Mr Tom Clarke, General Manager, AccessNI