

12<sup>th</sup> September 2016

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about NHS Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) and public consultation.

The Government acknowledges that local councils are vital in helping to set the strategic direction of health and care service development locally. STP footprints are not statutory bodies, they are collaborations of organisations working together to join up care for patients across agreed areas and to ensure there is a shared strategy to improve health and care across the whole community. Each organisation within the STP collaboration retains its usual duties to engage local people on any new proposals.

The Government is asking for robust local plans for engagement as part of the STP process. Where relevant, footprint areas should build on existing engagement through health and wellbeing boards and other existing local arrangements.

STPs will need to be developed with, and based upon, the needs of local patients and communities and command the support of clinicians, staff and wider partners such as local councils. Health and health care cannot be transformed without the active engagement of the clinicians and staff who actually deliver it, nor can we develop care integrated around the needs of patients and users without understanding what our communities want.

Each area is responsible for engaging local people and stakeholders on its draft proposals. The success of STPs will depend on having an open and engaging process that involves patients, carers, citizens, clinicians, local community partners, parliamentarians, the independent and voluntary sectors and local councils through health and wellbeing boards. Where plans propose service changes, formal consultation will follow in due course. The arm's length bodies will be holding conversations with each area to assess their plans for local engagement.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



**Alok Sharma MP**