

7<sup>th</sup> November 2016

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about NHS funding.

The NHS today helps more people to receive higher quality care than ever before. The Government is backing the NHS with an additional £10 billion per annum investment by the end of this Parliament and the employment of record numbers of doctors and nurses.

Nonetheless, the NHS faces substantial challenges and only a Conservative Government, which knows how to build a strong economy, can possibly help meet these through a combination of increased financial commitment and bold reforms.

I recognise the important role played by A&E departments across the country. I know the NHS is under pressure and, to ensure the best standards of care in the future, we need an updated system which even better prioritises GP access, cancer care and mental health treatment. The NHS is using Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) to help deliver this change. No decisions have been made and none will occur without local consultation.

The Five Year Forward View, produced by the NHS itself, sets out its own vision for the future. Its vision is one where the NHS provides more care closer to home, prioritises prevention and empowers citizens with the tools and information to manage their own care.

In each of 44 local areas, commissioners, providers and local authorities have come together to decide how to improve services and realise this vision. Far from being secret, STPs were publicly announced by NHS England in December 2015. These plans are not about making cuts, but to ensure that increased resources for the NHS lead directly to better care for patients.

STPs were submitted to NHS England on 21<sup>st</sup> October and they are now being scrutinised. A more formal process of local consultation is expected to begin later this year. The plans will then be published with full public engagement and consultation and no changes to the services people currently receive will be made without this. Furthermore, the Government is committed to ensuring full transparency and accountability about how the plans are being implemented.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



**Alok Sharma MP**

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