



## Craig Whittaker MP

CALDER VALLEY

[www.craigwhittakermp.co.uk](http://www.craigwhittakermp.co.uk)

### **Future NHS Funding: Update**

Thank you for contacting me about future NHS funding.

I believe fully in the NHS and its values, and I would like to assure you that the Government is committed to a tax-funded NHS, free at the point of use, wherever and whenever you need it. As Ministers plan a new relationship with the EU, I know they will continue to ensure that the NHS is given the priority it deserves.

Despite tight public finances, the Government has actively supported the NHS's own plan for the future. That is why it is increasing NHS spending by at least £8 billion in real terms over the next five years. This will ensure that by the end of this Parliament, everyone will be able to access GP services at evenings and weekend.

Over the next three years, the Government will provide the NHS with an additional £2.8 billion resource funding. By the end of this year, the NHS will receive £335 million to manage winter pressures; a further £1.6 billion will be invested in 2018-19, and in 2019-20, £900 million will be provided to help address future issues. Furthermore, the Government is currently offering local councils an additional £2 billion to help them fund adult social care services in a time of great pressure.

At the 2017 Autumn Budget, the Chancellor announced an additional programme of capital investment, further to the £425 million committed at the Spring Budget in March 2017. I am happy to say that this investment will be worth £3.5 billion, and will help NHS organisations deliver significant improvements to local services, improve performance, and significantly increase NHS efficiency.

I wholeheartedly support the Government's increase in the NHS budget. However, the NHS is a public service like any other, and local areas must live within their agreed budgets, otherwise they are effectively unfairly depriving other parts of the NHS of much-needed resources. The so-called 'capped expenditure process' is part of NHS England and NHS Improvement's financial planning, which examines how a small number of NHS areas could do more to balance their budgets, and remain on a financially sustainable footing for the long run.

You may be happy to hear that the Commonwealth Fund, a respected healthcare think-tank which works to improve access to healthcare around the world rated the NHS as the best healthcare system in the world, in an authoritative, comparative study of healthcare systems in developed economies. Whilst there is no room for complacency, I am encouraged that the NHS is performing well, despite many years of difficult financial circumstances.

More money is being invested in mental health than ever before, with an estimated record £11.4 billion this year and investment continues to rise. Additional mental health funding has been invested since April 2017, rising to £1 billion by 2020/21 for mental health to support crisis care and perinatal services, and respond to the Five Year Forward View for Mental Health. For children and young people, £1.4 billion has been committed to transform mental health and eating disorder services over five years.

The NHS will earmark an extra £2.4 billion a year for GP services by 2020/21, a 14 per cent real terms increase. This investment includes a £500 million Sustainability and Transformation package to help GP practices add to the workforce and tackle workload.

On top of this, to secure the best value for taxpayers, tough new financial controls have been introduced to cut down on waste in the NHS, including introducing caps for agency staff and management consultants, and introducing central procurement rules. I am glad to say that the limits on agency spending have saved the NHS roughly £1 billion between 2014 and 2016, and the NHS believes there is still significant progress to be made.

I understand that the NHS is putting into practice the Getting it Right First Time scheme, first piloted by orthopaedic surgeon Professor Tim Briggs. In 2016, the Health Secretary announced new plans to reduce infection in the NHS and improve surgical practice, which aims to save the NHS a further £1.5 billion per year, which can be reinvested in patient care.

In recognition of the pressures facing social care in local areas, the Chancellor has announced a package of measures in the recent budget which go even further to help the health and care system. Local Authorities in England will receive an additional £2 billion for social care over the next three years. This will help to ease pressures on the NHS by supporting more people to be discharged from hospital and into care as soon as they are ready.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig Whittaker', with a small 'M' at the end.

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