



## Craig Whittaker MP

CALDER VALLEY

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

### **The NHS and the Private Sector**

Thank you for contacting me about private sector involvement in the NHS.

I believe fully in the NHS and its values. The Government is committed to protecting the NHS and that is why NHS spending has increased and Ministers have guaranteed that it will always provide treatment free at the point of need, regardless of ability to pay.

The NHS is not being privatised. Like the last Labour Government this Government believes that there is a role for a range of non-state providers – voluntary organisations as well as commercial companies - to provide some services within the framework of the tax-payer-funded health service which is free at the point of use.

The use of private providers in the NHS represents just over seven pence in every pound the NHS spends, an increase of around two and a half pence in the pound since 2010, and a slower rate of growth than under Labour.

In addition, charities and social enterprises, such as Macmillan Nurses, continue to play an important role in the NHS, as they have done for many years.

The independent and widely respected independent think tank, the King's Fund, concluded after studying this issue that *'there is little evidence of a significant increase in spending on private providers or widespread privatisation of NHS services.'*

The use of private providers and the voluntary sector in the delivery of NHS services is not a new concept. The Labour Government between 1997 and 2010 introduced the independent sector and competition into the NHS. The focus throughout the NHS is to provide the highest quality of care to patients – and that is completely shared by the Government.

The Government's health reforms provide the framework to enable patients to be treated by the providers best able to meet their needs and give patients greater individual choice and control over their care. I think that it is right for local doctors and nurses to decide who provides the best care for patients.

In fact, it would be illegal for the Secretary of State to try deliberately to increase the share of private sector work carried out at the expense of other providers.

The NHS compares well with the best health systems around the world. Last year's Commonwealth Fund report put the NHS at the top of its league table of health systems, repeating its success in 2014.

This does not mean that the NHS has nothing to learn from other health systems. In order to improve services for patients, many of our best Trusts are keen to learn from international peers, drawing on insights from leading organisations around the world. On occasions, NHS organisations work in formal partnership with their peers, to the benefit of the NHS and the peer organisations themselves.

The NHS is something to be valued and protected which is why I support the Government's commitment to increase NHS spending in England by at least £8 billion in real terms over the next five years. This will enable the NHS to implement its own plan for the future to further improve health care in the *Five Year Forward View*.

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 stylized flourish at the end.

Craig Whittaker MP