



Craig Whittaker MP

CALDER VALLEY

www.craigwhittakermp.co.uk

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 throughout the course of this parliament.

Between 2017 and 2020, the Government will provide the NHS with an additional £2.8 billion resource funding. Last winter, the NHS received £335 million to manage seasonal pressures. £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.

I hugely welcome the Chancellor's additional programme of capital investment, further to the £425 million committed in 2017. This investment will be worth £3.5 billion, and will help NHS organisations improve local infrastructure, and significantly increase NHS efficiency.

I wholeheartedly support the Government's increase to 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. As I understand, 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.

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, 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.

Rising demand for health and social care, and an ageing population means a long term funding solution is required for the NHS; I am happy to say that the Government is looking to establish a sustainable funding model for the NHS which will secure it for the long term, and enable it to meet the growing demand expected in coming decades.

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