

Better healthcare

I am taking an interest in how the extra money for the NHS will be spent. It is most important that NHS England comes up with a proper plan of what they are trying to achieve by way of expansion and service improvements, so they can then test out how many extra staff they may need and what new contracts they should sign to deliver the better healthcare.

I understand that the Health Secretary is engaged on just such an exercise. I would be interested to hear from people, especially constituents, on what would be sensible requests for spending this additional cash. My priorities include wanting a well staffed GP service locally so that patients can get appointments that are timely and GPs feel they have manageable workloads so they can provide the best possible service. I think we do need some more hospital capacity for the most common procedures to reduce waiting times and provide some choice and flexibility for patients over when and where they receive treatment.

Local services need to be expanded to reflect the additional homes and increase in population. I share the government's wish to see better mental health provision where there are proven protocols and treatments that can make a difference to people in need of help.

The government is considering the role of technology in future medical services and care. How far do patients want to go with digital booking, or even remote consultations? I am keen that this should be based on patient preference rather than a mandatory conversion, as healthcare is a private and individual matter where the patient needs to feel happy with the system. Patients need to trust the doctor and the way he or she works for it stand most chance of being a success.