

More NHS beds

My campaign for more beds in the NHS to expand capacity and help bring the waiting lists down has at last been successful. The government announced on Monday £1bn more to pay for 5000 additional beds in NHS England hospitals with staff to look after patients, a 5% increase in the present total. I asked the Secretary of State if more of the additional £14bn also planned for the NHS could be used for further increases in capacity. With the population increasing and the elderly population increasing from greater longevity there is more demand. I will continue to press for more capacity as we need to get waiting lists and waiting times down more quickly.

My Intervention in the Urgent and Emergency Care Recovery Plan Debate, 30 January 2023

I strongly support the £1 billion for 5,000 additional beds and 800 more ambulances. I have long argued that, with a growing population and a growing elderly population, we need more capacity. Is it also possible to take some of the £14 billion of additional money to provide even more capacity? I think we are going to need it.

Minister of State for Health and Social Care:

Within my right hon. Friend's question is, I think, how we get more flow into hospital: once bed occupancy goes above a certain threshold, lack of flow is the key interaction that drives inefficiency within hospitals. That is why we are putting in the extra capacity. It is also a question of reducing the numbers going to hospital in the first place and speeding up the discharge of those who are fit to leave. Whereas at the moment someone might sit on a ward for three days because they have to have antibiotics every day, if one continuous dose of antibiotics can be administered through new kit at home, not only is that a much better patient experience but it relieves pressure on the wards.