

Why were there shouts of Resign to the Health Secretary?

I sat through the Health Secretary's latest statement in disappointed silence. I have heard a few Ministerial statements over the years that have bombed with the Ministers own side as this did, but do not recollect cries of Resign before from the government benches. Sajid Javed needs to ask himself why and start improving the way he does the job.

I guess the impatience with the Secretary of State reflects pent up anger about the way Ministers are constantly telling us the NHS cannot cope despite £64 bn more being spent on health this year than two years ago. Ministers are unable to answer basic questions about plans to recruit more, to increase beds, to improve air filtration in health settings, to improve infection control, and to find new treatments.

The PM and the Treasury both want the Health Secretary to get a grip on staffing budgets. They want him to turn the extra gold for the NHS into extra capacity and lower waiting lists. They want the NHS through a combination of vaccines, better treatments and extra capacity to show it can handle a realistic volume of covid disease going forward.

I did not ask another question as so many of my questions recently have not produced informative answers. My advice to Secretary of State is simple. Go through all the main issues with the CEO of NHS England so you can tell us how the money is being spent, how you will increase capacity, how you will improve infection control, how you will expand the range of covid treatments, how you will bring down the waiting list and then come back to the Commons with a plan to get better results. If the CEO cannot supply you with decent answers you need to consider how this can be brought about.

The public regard you as responsible. The CEO is your chosen person to run the NHS under your supervision, so make sure you know what is happening and are able to defend it.