

26<sup>th</sup> March 2019

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about NHS waiting times.

As I am sure you are aware, the Prime Minister recently announced the Government's intention to provide the NHS with an additional £20.5 billion by 2023/24; this is the largest, longest funding settlement in the history of the NHS. This landmark investment to help secure the long term future of our NHS is extremely welcome, and I hope you agree it demonstrates the Government's commitment to properly funding our NHS and public services.

The NHS Long Term Plan (LTP) laid out how this funding will be invested, with a focus on primary, community and mental health services, helping to deliver prevention and to manage demand. For example, all smokers who visit hospital will be offered access to an NHS smoking cessation programme, and better integrated local care will help to support patients to make healthy choices to prevent diabetes and cardiovascular disease. These preventative measures will help to reduce the number of people in need of secondary care services, enabling better access for patients in need.

Alongside this, the NHS was asked to undertake a clinical review of standards relating to waiting times. This must be clinically led to enable best, and safest, delivery of care for patients. I understand that NHS England has now prepared proposals, covering waiting times across the service, including mental health, cancer, and A&E.

The Government will now carefully consider the proposals before taking any next steps, and in the meantime, will continue to hold the NHS to account on its existing standards.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



**Alok Sharma MP**