

1<sup>st</sup> June 2020

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about the Trade Bill.

The Trade Bill is an important piece of legislation which has a number of practical functions. The UK has been working to reach continuity agreements with countries who we currently trade with through EU trade deals. The Trade Bill will enable these continuity agreements to be embedded into UK law so that the agreements can be fully implemented.

In addition, in leaving the EU, the UK will be acceding to the World Trade Organisation's Agreement on Government Procurement (GPA) in its own right. The Bill's provisions will make sure the UK can implement procurement obligations under the Agreement, ensuring continued access to £1.3 trillion per year of global procurement opportunities for UK businesses.

The Bill will also facilitate the creation of a new Trade Remedies Authority (TRA), to deliver a new UK trade remedies framework, which among other things will include protections for UK businesses from unfair trade practices or unforeseen import surges.

It is important to make clear that the Trade Bill is a continuity Bill, and its functions are largely distinct from the Government's future trade agreements programme. Indeed, the Bill cannot be used to implement new free trade agreements with countries such as the US. The Bill simply enables the 40 free trade agreements that the EU had signed with third countries before the UK exited to be transitioned.


Separate work on the future trade agreements programme is of course also pressing ahead, with negotiations already underway with the US, and soon to begin with Japan.

With specific regard to a UK-US free trade agreement (FTA), I believe that as our economy recovers from the challenges posed by COVID-19, we need to be negotiating enhanced trade ties rather than putting up barriers.

I am reassured by my Ministerial colleagues' commitment not to compromise the UK's high animal welfare, environmental, food safety and food import standards in any future FTA, including one with the US. Ministers do not want to compromise the UK's domestic welfare production standards either. The UK remains committed to the delivery of Sustainable Development Goals too, and will continue to meet all of its international commitments following a potential US trade deal.

I want to be clear that the NHS will also be protected in any future trade agreement, including one with the US. The price the NHS pays for drugs will not be on the table, and nor will the services the NHS provides. Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



**Alok Sharma MP**

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