

JEREMY QUIN MP
Member of Parliament for Horsham



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

13th February 2017

Dear Constituent,

RE: THE NHS

Thank you for contacting me about the NHS. This has been a source of great concern over the Winter months and I have made a point of visiting our local hospital services and seeing local GPs. I believe, due to the hard work and dedication of so many of our health service professionals most (though not all) of our services locally have managed to maintain services comparatively well over this difficult period. This is a tribute to all the staff involved, it in no way mitigates what I appreciate are very real concerns.

I believe in the NHS and its values. I recognise that the NHS has been under sustained pressure with the number of people aged over 80 rising by 340,000, and life expectancy rising by 12 months in the last six years alone. As a result, the NHS is facing an unprecedented demand. However, I know that the Government is determined to protect the service through an extremely challenging period and ensure its future sustainability.

This winter, the NHS has made more extensive preparations than ever before and there are now 11,400 more doctors and 11,200 more hospital nurses in the NHS since 2010. To support the NHS, investment of £350 million was included in local Clinical Commissioning Group budgets in 2016/17 for resilience planning, and £50 million was made available for national initiatives. The NHS also assured the winter plans of every trust, launched the largest ever flu vaccination programme and bolstered support outside A&Es, with 12,000 additional GP sessions offered over the festive period.

As a consequence of this preparation and, most importantly, the hard work of frontline staff, the system overall is coping and even performing slightly better than last year. Earlier in December, it treated a record number of patients within four hours and we are seeing 2,500 more patients within the four hour standard every single day compared with 2010.

However, I am aware that there are a number of trusts where the situation has been extremely fragile and NHS England is considering a series of further measures to be taken forward on a temporary basis at the discretion of local clinical leaders. Taken together, these actions will give the NHS additional flexibility to take further measures if appropriate at a local level.

The Government is committed to maintaining and delivering the four hour A&E standard to patients. It is widely understood that too many people are going to A&E without necessarily requiring immediate emergency treatment, and we must ensure the service focusses above all on rapid treatment for people who need it most. This will be done through triaging more people at the 'front doors' and pointing them towards more appropriate services, as well as giving more information to the public so they can make the right decisions about the services they need to access.

I can assure you that the Government remains committed to ensuring that the NHS offers the safest, highest-quality care available anywhere in the world.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeremy Quin'.