



October 2021

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about the Health and Care Bill.

The unprecedented threat of the COVID-19 pandemic reminded us how vital our health and care system is to all of us. I want to assure you that the NHS will always be free at the point of use, and any proposed reforms will aim to continue to improve the quality of these services and patient outcomes.

As we build back better from this pandemic, it is right and necessary that our health and care services are at the forefront. The pandemic underlined not only the dedication and skill of those in this sector, but also the necessity of a broader, more integrated health and care system. I welcome the intention to develop more joined up, integrated care between the NHS, Local Government and other partners including the voluntary and community sector, which will be vital in tackling the factors that affect the long-term sustainability of patient services. The Bill will make permanent some of the innovations we have seen as a result of the pandemic. I understand that these proposed reforms will also include proper accountability mechanisms and give patients and the public the confidence that they are receiving the best care from their healthcare system.

It is irresponsible scaremongering to suggest that Integrated Care Boards and Partnerships are being used to support privatisation, or cuts to NHS funding. The NHS will always be free at the point of use, and I believe these reforms will continue to improve the quality of NHS services and outcomes for patients. Ensuring every part of England is covered by an Integrated Care Board and Partnership is a key way of promoting local collaboration.

The Government has set out a clear commitment to supporting the NHS and our wider healthcare system. Not only is the Government providing the NHS with £33.9 billion in funding by 2023/24, the largest, longest funding settlement in the history of the NHS, an additional £36 billion will be made available for health and social care over the next three years. The NHS Long Term Plan also commits £4.5 billion in primary and community care to help strengthen local healthcare networks.

The Bill includes proposals to give local people, local clinicians and NHS organisations more control over the way health and care services are delivered. However, in a democracy, the public and Parliament, rightly, expect to be able to hold to account the decision makers who oversee the health system and the performance of the NHS, so I welcome measures in the Bill to allow for this. Importantly, I am assured that individual clinical decisions are explicitly exempt from the scope of the powers for the Secretary of State.

The measures set out in the Health and Care Bill deliver on the NHS's own proposals for reform in its Long Term Plan. I believe these proposals have been developed in consultation with key stakeholders in this sector, and I am encouraged by the preliminary positive feedback received. In particular, the comments from the Chief Executive of NHS England, who has said that this



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Bill “*will support our health and care services to be more integrated and innovative so the NHS can thrive in the decades to come*”, are reassuring.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP**  
**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**