



HOUSE OF COMMONS

2nd March 2020

Dear local residents,

Thank you to those who have contacted me about private sector involvement in the NHS, as well as future trade agreements.

I fully believe in our NHS and its guiding principles that it is universal and free at the point of need.

The use of private providers and the voluntary sector in the delivery of NHS services is not a new concept, with previous Governments introducing the independent sector and competition into the service between 1997 and 2010. While private providers do play a small role in improving the provision of health care, let me be abundantly clear: the Government will never privatise the NHS.

The NHS is something to be valued and protected which is why I support the commitment to ensuring it is properly funded. Since 2010, the NHS budget has increased every year and, despite challenging financial circumstances, will be increased by a further £33.9 billion in real terms by 2023/24.

On future free trade agreements, the Government has been repeatedly clear that the NHS will never be on the table in any trade agreements. This is a position I fully support.

Free trade is a driver of economic growth which can raise incomes, create jobs, and lift people out of poverty, which is why I am pleased that, outside of the EU, the UK will be able to strike new trade agreements with countries across the globe. However, I am clear that more trade should not come at the expense of the high levels of quality and protection enjoyed in our country.

The Government has said that the UK will continue to ensure that the NHS is protected in all trade agreements it is party to, whether transitioned from an EU context or as a result of new negotiations. Indeed, outside of the EU, rigorous protections for our NHS will be maintained and included in any future trade agreement to which our country is party.

With specific regard to investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) mechanisms in trade agreements, I understand the Government is considering the future approach. However, it is important to note ISDS does not, and cannot, force the privatisation of public services or oblige the Government to open the NHS to further competition.



I hope that this information is reassuring. If you have any further concerns about this, or any other issues, please do get back in touch.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jane". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name.

Jane Hunt MP