



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

20th November 2014

Dear Colleague,

You will have received multiple 38 Degrees emails in advance of Friday's Second Reading of the Efford Bill – so I wanted to ensure you can reassure constituents with facts rather than the baseless scaremongering that is being broadcast by political opponents using the Bill as a vehicle.

This Bill seeks to prevent 'privatisation' that simply isn't happening.

- There are no new competition provisions in the Health and Social Care Act - it simply codified practices the old PCTs were obliged to follow under European law.
- Private sector provision grew at twice the rate under Labour than under this Government. Only 6 pence in every pound spent by the NHS is spent with private sector providers.
- Labour signed contracts with the private sector that guaranteed levels of income to Independent Sector Treatment Centres regardless of the amount of work they actually carried out – which we have stopped.
- We have made it a matter of law that commissioners cannot pursue competition in the NHS if it is not in the interests of patients.

The NHS Confederation, the independent membership body that represents the service, has already expressed serious concerns about the Bill, citing the 'potential for disruption caused by further changes'.

The Bill stops local doctors making decisions about the best services for their patients. Clinical leadership is highly valued in the NHS - but this Bill seriously undermines it.

What the reforms actually did was remove layers of bureaucracy in the old SHA and PCT organisations so we have been able to recruit additional frontline staff:

- They removed 19,000 managers;
- They save the NHS £5.5 billion in this Parliament alone and then £1.5 billion every year after that;
- They mean we can afford to employ 8,000 more doctors and 5,600 more nurses on our wards compared to 2010;
- They help us to carry out nearly a million more operations a year, perform millions more diagnostic tests, and refer 51% more patients for cancer treatment, ensuring people get the care they need.

The Bill also claims that it will stop the NHS being affected by TTIP. Labour ignore the facts here too – because if there was any risk to the NHS, I would be the first to oppose the deal. The EU’s chief negotiator on the deal has said that ‘provisions in TTIP could have no impact on the UK’s sovereign right to make changes to the NHS’.

- The EU have acknowledged that the deal ‘excludes any commitment on public services, and the governments remain at any time free to decide that certain services should be provided by the public sector’.
- Labour MP John Healey, a former Minister, has said the deal protects the NHS and ‘progressives should keep campaigning’ for a TTIP deal ‘that will be good for British consumers and workers’

And here are some other facts Labour won’t tell you –

- Andy Burnham remains the only Secretary of State in history to privatise the services run by an entire hospital.
- Labour went into the last election promising to increase private provision of healthcare – with their Manifesto promising to support ‘an active role for the independent sector.’
- When he was Secretary of State, Andy Burnham said that he wanted the NHS to ‘finally move beyond the polarising debates of the last decade over private or public sector provision’.

I hope that this is helpful – please contact me or my PPS, Andrew Jones, if you need anything else.

Best wishes,

Jeremy

JEREMY HUNT MP
Secretary of State for Health