

Richard Burden MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS, LONDON, SW1A 0AA

NHS WAITING TIMES

Thank you for contacting me recently about NHS waiting time standards.

Patients are repeatedly being let down by a Government which has spent nine years underfunding the NHS, imposing the biggest cash squeeze in its history and cutting public health and social care budgets.

A&E waiting times are now at their worst level since records began. I believe this is a damning indictment of years of austerity and wider cuts imposed upon health and care services by this Government. During January, only 84.4% of patients were treated or admitted in four hours - well below the 95% threshold.

Instead of putting patients first with a clear plan to restore the A&E standard, Ministers are looking at scrapping it altogether in the face of opposition from the doctors who work in A&E departments. The Government's mandate to NHS England for 2018-19 has already confirmed that flagship waiting times targets for planned and emergency care have been abandoned for another year. The mandate issues no objective for the 18-week referral to treatment target nor the four-hour A&E target to be met during the year.

The NHS Long-Term Plan includes welcome ambitions to improve care for patients over the next ten years. However, it contains no credible plan to restore the statutory standards of care that patients are entitled to under the NHS constitution.

Despite the brilliant efforts of NHS staff, who work tirelessly in the face of increasing pressures, years of pay restraint and a failure to invest in and plan appropriately for the workforce has resulted in more than 100,000 staff vacancies. Ministers promised a long-term workforce plan, but they have failed to set out how they intend to recruit the additional staff the NHS so desperately needs.

Labour Member of Parliament for Birmingham Northfield
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At the last general election, I stood on a manifesto with a commitment to fully fund the NHS and secure sustainable future funding for the social care sector. It also offered a long-term workforce plan to ensure safe staffing levels and to give staff the support they need. I believe this would have secured the standards of service to which patients are legally entitled.

Thank you once again for contacting me about this important issue.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Burden', written in a cursive style.

Richard Burden MP
Birmingham Northfield