



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

2nd July 2020

New Content,

RE: THE NHS & FUTURE TRADE DEALS

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of the National Health Service (NHS) and future free-trade agreements; your comments upon which I have read with great interest.

Like you, I cherish our NHS and its guiding principles: that it is universal and free at the point of need. I believe that the passion, commitment, and specialist knowledge of our NHS staff is part of what makes our NHS so special, and never before has that been so evident than during COVID-19.

The Government has been repeatedly clear that our NHS will never be on the table in any future trade agreements - a position I fully support. The Government could not be clearer on this point, and nor could I as your local Member of Parliament. Suggestions to the contrary are brazen and irresponsible scaremongering and bear no relation to the reality.

Instead, 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 agreements.

Free trade is a driver of economic growth which can raise incomes, create jobs, and lift people out of poverty, whilst also enhancing our ability to invest in our public services, as a direct result of increasing our economic prosperity. That is why I am glad that outside of the EU, the UK will be able to strike new trade agreements with countries across the globe. But more trade should not come at the expense of the high levels of quality and protection enjoyed in our country.

That is why the NHS will be protected in any future trade agreement - including one with the US - and the price the NHS pays for drugs will not be on the table either, and nor will the services the NHS provides.



Furthermore, I fully support the Government's mission to make the NHS the safest, highest quality healthcare system in the world, and it is worth noting that there are over 14,000 additional doctors and over 13,000 more nurses on our wards since 2010.

How we value and retain our NHS staff is critical, and I am very pleased to say that the latest pay deal is seeing a 6.5 percent pay rise for over one million NHS workers over three years. This will benefit not just nurses, but all staff on the 'Agenda for Change' pay scale. My Ministerial colleagues set aside £800 million to support the deal for 2018/19, and the Government's long-term funding settlement for the NHS, which will provide increased funding of £33.9 billion per year in real terms by 2023/24, is funding the pay rise over the remaining two years.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me, and I hope that the above has offered some reassurance to you. If I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,
Tom

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**