



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

September 2021

Dear Constituent

Thank you for your email about Integrated Care Boards and private sector providers.

I fully believe in our NHS and its values, which is why I welcome that the Government has guaranteed that the NHS will always provide healthcare free at the point of delivery, regardless of ability to pay. 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.

I welcome the intention, through the Health and Care Bill, to develop more integrated care between the NHS, local government, social care providers and other partners to deliver better integration of health and care services on the ground. The reforms proposed in the Bill will continue to improve the quality and sustainability of NHS services and outcomes for patients.

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 keyway of promoting local collaboration. Service provision by the independent and voluntary sectors has been, and continues to be, an important and valuable feature of our healthcare system, which I fully support. Safeguards are already in place to ensure that the interests of the public and the NHS are always put first. The ICB chair would have the power to veto members of the board and there are robust requirements on ICBs to manage conflicts of interests.

That said, I do appreciate that there are concerns about private sector involvement in ICBs. It is important that people are assured that the work of ICBs will be driven by health outcomes, not by profits. The use of private providers and the voluntary sector in the delivery of NHS services is not a new concept, with the previous Government introducing the independent sector and competition into the NHS between 1997 and 2010.

Member of Parliament for Darlington

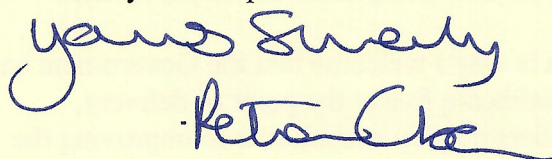
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I know that the Bill does not allow private sector providers to influence, or to make, decisions on spending, but it is welcome that the Government has committed to putting that beyond doubt. They will bring forward an amendment at the next stage of the Bill's passage through Parliament to protect the independence of ICBs by preventing individuals with significant interests in private healthcare from sitting on them. I know that ministerial colleagues will be working to ensure that any amendment is appropriately worded and does not have any unintended consequences. I look forward to seeing their proposed amendment in due course and can assure you that I will scrutinise its contents closely.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact me and if I can ever be any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Peter Gibson', written in a cursive style.

PETER GIBSON MP