



**Chris Heaton-Harris**  
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*Dear Constituent,*

Thank you for contacting me about World Arthritis Day.

I am aware that this year's focus is on the recovery from COVID-19. I commend Versus Arthritis for their important work on this and other campaigns which help raise awareness and support advocacy on behalf of all those who suffer with arthritis.

Thanks to the sacrifices of people across the UK, we have been able to protect the NHS from being overwhelmed by COVID-19. The extraordinary efforts of all NHS staff has ensured that the NHS withstood the challenge of the pandemic, treating and caring for millions of people. I pay tribute to each and every one of them.

Of course, the need to focus on the response to the pandemic meant resources were diverted to tackling the pandemic resulting now in a significant backlog in elective care. In England, 5.5 million people are currently waiting for treatment, at least 900,000 more than before the pandemic.

The Government is investing an additional £12 billion per year over the next three years in health and social care. I welcome the Government's commitment to tackling the elective backlog through the biggest catch-up programme in the NHS's history. £2 billion will be spent this year, double the previous commitment, with an additional £8 billion to be spent in the following three years. This welcome funding could deliver the equivalent of around 9 million more checks, scans and procedures and will mean NHS England can aim to deliver around 30% more elective activity by 2024-25 than before the pandemic. This investment in elective surgery and diagnostic facilities will be vital in allowing those who suffer with arthritis to access the care they need.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP**  
**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**