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November 2021

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about workforce planning and the Health and Care Bill.

The workforce is the beating heart of the NHS and I pay tribute to all those who work so hard in our health service.

Clause 34 of the Health and Care Bill would require the production of a workforce accountability report at least every five years. This report will increase transparency and accountability in the workforce planning process, putting in place the proper structures.

Additionally, the Department for Health and Social Care has already commissioned Health Education England to work with partners to develop a long-term 15-year strategic framework for the health and social care workforce. This will look at the key drivers of workforce demand and supply over the longer term and will set out how they impact on the future workforce. This is a welcome piece of work and I look forward to its publication, which I am told is expected to be published in the spring.

It is vital that workforce planning is closely integrated to the wider planning across health and social care. Health Education England will be merged with NHS England, putting long-term planning and strategy for healthcare staff recruitment and retention at the forefront of the national NHS agenda.

Upon listening closely to the points raised in the debate on the Health and Care Bill, I am satisfied that the Government recognises there is still more to do in the case of the workforce, and I welcome their ongoing work and commitment to looking at measures needed to address challenges. As such I did not vote in favour of the amendment, but I have noted the points raised and will ensure ministers are aware of them as the bill continues its parliamentary progress.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY