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### **Cardiovascular Disease: Diagnosis and Treatment:**

An estimated 7.6 million people in the UK are living with heart or circulatory disease. It is vital that everyone affected receives effective and timely diagnosis, referral, and treatment.

I share concerns, however, about the state of heart care services. Despite the best efforts of staff, there is a significant backlog in treatment, which is having a detrimental impact on patients. The number of people on waiting lists for cardiology services is rising and now stands at a record 384,000: a 189% increase in the last ten years.

The Government said it is supporting the NHS to reduce backlogs. But waiting lists have risen to record levels: nearly one in seven people are waiting for treatment, more than ever before. And the root cause of this crisis is the failure to provide the NHS with the doctors and nurses it needs to treat patients on time, with over 125,000 current vacancies across the NHS.

The Government has had 13 years to address these problems. Instead, I am concerned ministers have weakened standards for patients, who are paying more in tax but getting worse care.

In my view we must build an NHS fit for the future, to improve cardiovascular care and ensure patients get the treatment they need, when they need it.

I support an ambitious ten-year plan of reform and modernisation: speeding up treatment, focusing on prevention, and harnessing life sciences and technology to reduce preventable illness and cut health inequalities. The plan will explicitly target the three biggest avoidable killers, including cardiovascular disease, with the aim of reducing deaths from heart disease and stroke by a quarter within ten years.

Key to these reforms will be a greater focus on prevention, tackling the social inequalities that influence health, and boosting capacity in local public health teams to support people to live healthier lives.

We owe it to all those living with cardiovascular disease to set out a proper plan to improve outcomes, providing our NHS with the staff, technology, and resources it needs to bring down waiting lists and improve patient care.

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