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Pulmonary Fibrosis:

Pulmonary fibrosis is a debilitating disease that can have a severe physical, emotional, and social impact on individuals. I sympathise profoundly with anyone who is affected.

Early diagnosis is essential so treatment can begin as soon as possible and so people can better manage their condition. I pay tribute to Action for Pulmonary Fibrosis for raising the profile of this disease and for its campaigning during Pulmonary Fibrosis Awareness Month.

I recognise constituents concerns about delays in diagnosis, treatment and care for individuals living with pulmonary fibrosis, and the impact on patient care.

I am concerned that the problems across our health service are endemic: waiting lists have risen to record levels – nearly one in seven people are waiting for treatment – and patients find it harder than ever before to see their GP. Despite the best efforts of staff, public satisfaction with the NHS is at its lowest level since 1997. And the root cause of the crisis is a failure to provide the health service with doctors and nurses it needs to treat patients on time – staff vacancies stand at 125,000.

The long-awaited NHS workforce plan mirrors commitments I have been calling for. But ministers have not set out how the measures will be paid for, whether through higher taxes or higher borrowing. I supported a workforce plan that was, in contrast, fully funded, paid for by ending the non-domiciliary tax regime.

I support an ambitious plan to tackle NHS backlogs, improve GP access to advance earlier diagnosis, raise standards, and cut health inequalities. I believe we need to change and modernise our NHS to meet the health challenges of the 21st century: shifting the focus of care out of hospitals and into the community, so that our NHS becomes as much a Neighbourhood Health Service; and bringing back the family doctor to ensure continuity of care.

We owe it to all those living with pulmonary fibrosis to build an NHS fit for the future - providing it with the staff, technology, resources, and reform it needs - to provide high quality healthcare that works for patients and puts them at the centre of the health system.

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