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Liver Scans in Community Diagnostic Centres:

I sympathise profoundly with anyone who is affected by liver disease. Early detection and access to specialist care are vital: 90% of liver disease is preventable and, in many cases, it is reversible. Yet three-quarters of people in the UK are diagnosed when it is too late for effective intervention or treatment, and the provision of specialist liver disease services varies across the country.

The Government said the NHS is working to improve care for patients with all types of liver disease, and that reducing waiting times for diagnostics and treatment is a priority.

But I remain concerned that our health service is under immense pressure. NHS waiting lists have risen to record levels: nearly one in seven people are now waiting for treatment, more than ever before. The rise in the prevalence of liver disease, combined with a shortage of specialist care, is compounding the crisis facing all parts of our NHS. 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 - our NHS is short of over 112,000 staff.

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. We owe it to all those affected by liver disease to set out a proper plan to improve diagnosis and treatment.

In my view, we need to build an NHS that is fit for the future, providing it with the staff, technology, and resources it needs. I support an ambitious ten-year plan for change and modernisation that will improve GP access to advance earlier diagnosis, raise standards, reduce preventable illness, and cut health inequalities. The plan will shift the focus to prevention, boost capacity in local public health teams and tackle the social inequalities that influence health.

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