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Treatment for Dementia:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) announced in November 2023 that it was preparing to evaluate the new drugs lecanemab and donanemab. As with the development and approval processes of all new drugs and medical interventions, progress with new dementia treatments will take time.

I am concerned that the current crisis within the NHS means that when breakthrough dementia treatments are approved by the regulators and made available, the NHS will not be ready to implement them. Meanwhile, the Government has shelved its plan for a dedicated dementia strategy.

Both workforce and diagnostic capacity is key to addressing this challenge. It is not right that the hard work of NHS staff is squandered by a government unable to bring about an end to the NHS crisis. It is also not good enough that patients in many parts of the country play a post-code lottery for diagnosis, let down by a lack of equipment.

I support plans to oversee the biggest workforce expansion in NHS history, and a 'fit for the future' fund, doubling the number of scanners across the health service, and tackling the crisis of late diagnosis in dementia.

An NHS equipped for the future will make it easier to conduct live-saving research in the UK with a more standardised process for clinical trials, alongside a strategy to make better use of clinical trials registries to make it easier for more patients to participate. This will allow vital drugs like lecanemab and donanemab to be evaluated and approved at faster rates, speeding up the rollout of breakthrough treatments.

I will continue to monitor the regulatory progress of these treatments and raise awareness on this importance issue.

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