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Dementia NHS Continuing Healthcare:

Dementia is one of the biggest health and care challenges of our time. I sympathise profoundly with anyone who is affected. As researchers work to find a cure, improving early diagnosis and access to support must be a priority, ensuring everyone affected receives appropriate care.

As constituents may know, unlike local authority arranged social care, NHS CHC is organised and funded by the NHS to meet the physical and/or mental health needs because of disability, accident or illness. Eligibility is based on an individual's needs rather than a diagnosis of a specific medical condition.

The Government's National Framework for CHC aims to improve the consistency of approach taken by local NHS bodies when determining eligibility. The Social Care Minister recently confirmed that NHS England has an assurance regime in place to ensure accurate assessments, equal access, standardisation, and consistency within CHC.

I am aware of Dementia UK's concerns, however, that families are missing out on funding, describing the NHS CHC assessment process as "flawed". I urge ministers to look at these issues closely and consider what more can be done to support people living with dementia who may be eligible for NHS CHC.

Around half a million older and disabled people are on council waiting lists for care and there are 152,000 care worker vacancies across the sector. Yet the Government has repeatedly delayed reforms to social care, with the Chancellor instead relying on councils to increase taxes on working people to plug funding gaps. In my view, we need to put social care at the heart of a modernised welfare state as an essential part of our economic infrastructure. I support calls for a world-class National Care Service that makes people as proud as the NHS does: improving quality and standards and transforming access to make sure everyone who needs care and support can get it when and where they need it.

This must start with improving standards in the current system, delivering better pay, terms and conditions for care workers, and supporting unpaid carers. It also means establishing stronger national standards to reduce inequalities in access to care.

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