

DearMP,

I have hand delivered this letter to you because I am deeply concerned about the Health and Care Bill, and want to ensure that you have all the information you need to oppose its most harmful elements during the upcoming Report stage.

I am asking you to support multiple amendments to the Bill, to address two major flaws that will place our NHS at great risk if unamended:

1. The NHS needs safeguarding from crony contracting

Clauses 68 and 69, and Schedule 12 of the new Health and Care Bill propose to repeal Section 75 of the Health and Social Care Act of 2012. Section 75 required commissioners to put all services out for competition between prospective providers, and **scrapping it without replacing it with safeguards for our NHS will open the door to more cronyism** of the kind that MPs from all parties have condemned during the pandemic.

This will only make the process of contracting **less accountable and transparent. 75% of the British public want to see an end to private company involvement in our health care.** The NHS *must be the default provider* of NHS services, which is why I am asking you to back Richard Burgon MP's amendment to give NHS Trusts and Foundation Trusts the right of first refusal to deliver NHS services.

2. Private companies sitting on NHS decision making boards pose a serious conflict of interest

Private companies that are commissioned to provide NHS Services could be allowed to sit on Integrated Care System boards as they are currently constituted, **allowing them to make decisions about how NHS budgets are spent.** This has already happened in Bath, with a Virgin Care representative sitting on the local ICS recorded as opposing sharing information with the public.

At the Public Bills Committee sitting on Tuesday, 14th September, Minister of State for Health, Edward Argar committed the government to table an amendment **"to protect the independence of ICBs by preventing individuals with significant interests in private healthcare from sitting on them"**.

This is a step in the right direction. However, the wording of this amendment must be specific enough to prevent **individuals who hold shares in or work for private healthcare companies from sitting on Integrated Care Boards.**

I am asking you to do everything in your power to make sure our NHS is protected from this serious conflict of interest.

We have never needed our NHS more. As the British Medical Association has stated, now is not the time for risky reorganisation. This is the time for strengthening and safeguarding our health service.

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider these urgent matters. If you need more information or support opposing this legislation, do not hesitate to contact info@weownit.org.uk.

Yours sincerely,

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