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# Report from Sharon Hodgson MP



*Jonathan Ashworth MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Health, joins the campaign to save our Urgent Care Centres in Bunny Hill, Washington and Houghton from cuts.*

## National Health Service at 70

This week on the 5th of July 2018, the National Health Service turned 70. The founding of our NHS is one of Britain's greatest achievements. Founded in 1948 by the Labour Government, on three core principles: that it meet the needs of everyone; that it be free at the point of delivery; and that it be based on clinical need, not ability to pay. The NHS was a ground-breaking departure from the status quo. We should use this year to celebrate the achievements of our NHS, and be vocal in our appreciation for the thousands of people who work tirelessly to provide people with health care. Whether that's the nurses and doctors in A&E, the porters and cleaners who keep our hospitals clean, or the cancer surgeons who perform ground breaking operations, I know that we have all had reason to be thankful in one way or another. We are lucky enough that going to see your GP, or being taken to A&E, will cost you nothing at the time of need, but we must not take it for granted.

Since its foundation, the NHS has had to deal with a number of different challenges. An ever-increasing population, greater life expectancies, and funding cuts have all at some point contributed to huge pressures on both the

infrastructure, and the workforce of our NHS. Indeed, eight years of austerity have left their mark on the ability of the NHS to carry out its intended aims. Since the Lib-Dem/Tory coalition Government came into office in 2010, life expectancy has stalled for the first time. As of May this year, around 4.2 million people were waiting for non-urgent hospital treatment in England, and over the winter the rate of people being seen in Accident and Emergency within 4 hours fell below 80% in some months. The target (set at 95%) has not been hit since July 2015, a shocking indictment of this Government's record. We must not underestimate the extent of the long lasting damage that the intentional under-funding of the NHS has already had.

Only a Labour Government would ensure that our health service is properly funded. It is no longer good enough for the Government to provide piecemeal increases, whilst people wait for the care they need.

I look forward to the celebrations this month, but urge all my constituents not to take any of our NHS services for granted, and to engage in the current consultation being carried out by Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). This consultation could see the closure of 3 Urgent Care Centres in Sunderland.

It's up to all of us to make our voices heard, and protect these vital services for the generations to come.

## Nissan

The Nissan plant in Washington provides 7,000 direct jobs, and tens of thousands more through the supply chain. Recently, the company's CEO Carlos Ghosn, said that the uncertainty surrounding Brexit left him unable to make long-term decisions about Nissan's UK operations. This is an extremely concerning development, and one that exemplifies just how much of a negative impact this Government's Brexit policies are having. These decisions will have a real impact on people's jobs, livelihoods, and futures. I spoke with Nissan's London office as the news broke, and will be meeting with senior management at the plant over the summer recess to further discuss their position.

## Some highlights (No. 106 - Jun/Jul 2018)

### In Parliament

In my capacity as Shadow Minister for Public Health, I have responded to a number of important debates in Westminster Hall on various important health issues.

#### Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME) Debate

ME is a serious neurological disease which affects an estimated 250,000 adults and children in the UK. Despite this, little is understood in the medical world and patients are therefore often misunderstood, recommended the wrong treatment and have to fight for the correct diagnosis. Research into this disease is hugely underfunded, so I urged the Government to consider funding vital research into ME, to help those suffering with this awful disease.

#### Acquired Brain Injuries (ABI) Debate



It was an honour to speak in this debate and pay tribute to the late Baroness Jowell, but also to raise awareness of the amazing work Headway Wearside do to help those suffering from an ABI in order to support and help patients access the care they need. I urged the minister to recognise the need for services such as Headway Wearside and the other 126 across the country, so that the more than 1 million people living with a brain injury can access the support they need and deserve.

#### Hepatitis C Debate

I welcomed NHS England's ambitious commitment earlier this year to eliminate Hepatitis C by 2025. However, in my speech I addressed some of my concerns about the challenges that need to be faced in order to achieve this target.

#### Phenylketonuria (PKU) Debate

I was pleased to take part in this debate and meet with patients and their families and carers in order to learn more about PKU. PKU is an extremely rare disease which means those suffering can only eat a very small amount of protein and therefore must live on a very restrictive diet and take special protein replacements. During the debate I asked the minister whether he had

had any conversations with Public Health England and the CGCs to ensure that people with PKU have proper and equal access to prescription-only foods and supplements.

### In and around the Constituency

#### Urgent Care Centres Campaign Launch



It was great to join local residents and campaigners at the launch of the campaign against the closure of three Urgent Care Centres in Sunderland. The services provided at Bunny Hill and Washington are essential to the community, and I will continue to campaign against their closure. I am also encouraging constituents to participate in the consultation:

<http://www.sunderlandccg.nhs.uk/get-involved/urgent-care-services/public-consultation-get-involved>

Following the launch, I was also delighted to welcome Labour's Shadow Secretary for Health & Social Care, Jonathan Ashworth to the constituency at a well-attended rally against these potential closures. It was great to hear him outline how a Labour Government would properly fund the NHS, and firmly speak out against these plans.

#### Labour Party policy event with Angela Rayner MP



I was so pleased to welcome my friend and colleague Angela Rayner, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Education, to the constituency. The event enabled members from across the North East, together with Trade Unionists and members of the public to discuss ideas around education policy for the next Labour Party manifesto. It was great to see so many people attend, and participate during the event.

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