

**Written evidence submitted by the Department of Health and Social Care (RTR0161)**

Rt. Hon Jeremy Hunt MP  
Chair, Health and Social Care Committee

Dear Jeremy,

23 June 2022

I am writing to you following the oral evidence session on 7 June in which I gave evidence to your 'Workforce: recruitment, training and retention in health and social care' inquiry.

During the session I committed to providing further evidence in writing relating to when the workforce elements of the Ockenden report will be implemented, timescales for publication of the Women's Health Strategy, and further information relating to the Princess Royal Hospital in Telford's orthopaedic surgery practices.

NHS England are providing a £127 million funding boost for maternity and neonatal services across England over the next year to bolster the workforce and strengthen leadership, retention as well as provide new capital funding to improve neonatal care. This is on top of the £95 million to strengthen Trust board assurance and surveillance, address workforce numbers by increasing the number of posts by 1,200 additional midwives and 100 consultant obstetricians and enable multi-disciplinary training. We will continue to support NHSE to assess the workforce element of the final Ockenden Report.

We are embarking on the first Women's Health Strategy for England, marking a reset in the way in which the Government is looking at women's health. We aim to publish the Women's Health Strategy before summer recess, subject to parliamentary time allowing.

I am aware that elective orthopaedic surgery at Princess Royal Hospital (PRH) was paused due to pressures during the winter period. During and following the pandemic the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust (SaTH) has been working hard to resume the service, but I understand the hospitals remained under pressure from the demand for urgent care and the ongoing effects of COVID-19.

I recognise that the disruption caused by the pandemic has had a significant and far-reaching impact on people across the country, with many cancelled and postponed appointments and procedures. This disruption has affected their quality of life, ability to work, and independence.

Although elective orthopaedic surgery has not taken place during this time, the trust has been working with wider NHS partners to ensure their patients can be treated in alternative settings, in this case utilising capacity at Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt by medical staff from the Princess Royal. In addition, I can confirm that the trust is aiming to open further capacity from 20 June to allow elective orthopaedic services to restart at the Princess

Royal site, however this is dependent on the management of wider service pressures including urgent and emergency care. Urgent cases and those that have been waiting a long time will be prioritised for surgery once the service resumes.

Both nationally and regionally the NHS is working to ensure that long waiting patients receive the services that they need and that long waits for services are addressed. Earlier this year, the NHS published the Delivery Plan for Tackling the COVID-19 Backlog of Elective Care. This plan set out a clear vision for how the NHS will recover and expand elective services over the next three years. This is supported by a national programme and regular review of performance, which includes weekly provider level management information on long waiting patients. Through this data the national and regional teams support and manage providers and systems to improve performance and to offer alternatives where possible.

I recognise that better information and improvements in communication to patients is also needed. You will be pleased to hear one of our four priorities within the plan includes providing patients with better information and support. To facilitate this, the NHS launched a new platform called 'My Planned Care' to increase transparency on wait times and provide a hub of support information for patients covering the entire pathway. The platform includes average waiting time for first outpatient appointment at their trust and average waiting time for treatment at their trust by specialty. The NHS is also working hard both locally and nationally to ensure that patients are informed about changes to their care.

I assure you, it is a priority of this department, and the government, to work with the NHS to tackle waiting lists, reduce waiting times and ensure services are restored across England.

Yours ever,



**RT HON SAJID JAVID MP**

**June 2022**