

From: campaign@westsuffolkconservatives.com

Date: Thu, Aug 1, 2024 at 12:48 PM

To: Gwen Williams

Subject: RE: Suffolk West Federation of WIs - Dental Health Matters

Dear Gwen

Thank you for your email of 15 July. I am sorry it has taken longer than I would have liked to reply, but new MPs are inundated with correspondence and we have not yet had time to recruit and establish our offices. We are moving quickly to get things in place and it will all be smoother by the end of the summer.

Thank you for writing about such an important issue. I agree that the difficulty accessing NHS dentistry services is a major problem, and I know it is very upsetting, especially for parents. Frankly, in a country as developed as Britain this is not good enough.

The last government tried to address problems with recruitment and retention with golden hello payments for dentists moving to cold spots. It announced an extra £200 million with the aim of allowing an extra 2.5 million appointments during a single year. The money was to be focused on places where there was a lack of NHS dentistry provision. On training, the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan introduced by the last government is increasing the number of dental training places in the years ahead.

That said, I think the problem runs deeper, and we are going to need to see the reform of dentistry contracts in a more comprehensive way that does not just address one-off costs and challenges with opening a surgery, but also makes sure that NHS services are truly sustainable, meaning dentists can offer what people need on an ongoing basis.

I also think we need to recognise that services such as dentistry are suffering because of sharp increases in population size. One of the issues I have campaigned on is the need to get much tougher with developers to make sure that they meet the capital costs of infrastructure such as new dentist surgeries.

We need to make sure they deliver such benefits in good time before people move into a community. Too often, irresponsible developers get away with failing to provide promised investment — or are not even asked to deliver adequate improvements in amenities as part of a planning application.

We also need to recognise why our population is growing so quickly. We know that rapid population growth puts strains on services and infrastructure, and we know that the unacceptably high level of immigration is by far the largest driver of population growth. This effect on what economists call the capital stock of the country is just one reason why I think we need to drastically cut the level of immigration.

Thank you for writing in, and if you would like to further discuss this — or any other issue — I would be delighted to meet.

Yours sincerely

Nick Timothy