



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Dr Zubir Ahmed MP
Department of Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

06 October 2025

Dear Zubir Ahmed,

I am writing regarding the Government's decision to abolish Healthwatch. While I share your goal of improving NHS productivity, I am deeply concerned that this move risks undermining patient representation and accountability within our health and care services.

The NHS has already been brought to its knees by years of mismanagement, and reforms are undoubtedly needed. However, independent patient advocacy is not a luxury - it is essential to maintaining patient safety, confidence in services, and meaningful accountability. By transferring Healthwatch's functions in-house to Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), patients will lose an independent channel for their voices to be heard. This risks placing ICBs in the conflicted position of both managing services and holding themselves to account.

I was particularly concerned by the answer to Written Question 75396, which confirmed that Healthwatch's functions would first be transferred to NHS England before being incorporated into new Department of Health and Social Care structures. Given the parallel decision to wind down NHS England, this appears to add unnecessary complexity and risks creating confusion about responsibilities.

It is essential that a full impact assessment of these proposed changes is conducted before any final decision is taken. In response to Written Question 75531 it was confirmed that an impact assessment has not yet taken place. This must be prioritised and specifically consider the potential consequences for patient representation, accountability, and local authority scrutiny.

In light of these issues, I would urge you to:

- Reverse the decision to abolish this crucial service.
- Guarantee ring-fenced funding for independent patient advocacy services.
- Ensure robust accountability mechanisms remain in place for health and care services at the local level.
- Recognise that while value for money is important, cost-cutting must not come at the expense of patient safety.

- Set out clearly how the Government will guarantee that the views of patients are independently heard at all levels of the NHS.

Healthwatch has played a vital role in amplifying patients' experiences, enabling advocacy, and supporting scrutiny. I therefore urge you to reconsider this decision and to provide assurances that the principles of independence, accountability, and patient safety will not be compromised.

Kind regards,



Tom Gordon MP

Member of Parliament for Harrogate and Knaresborough

Adam Dance (Yeovil)

Alex Brewer (North East Hampshire)

Alison Bennett (Mid Sussex)

Dr Al Pinkerton (Surrey Heath)

Anna Sabine (Frome & East Sussex)

Ben Maguire (North Cornwall)

Charlotte Cane (Ely and East Cambridgeshire)

Chris Coghlan (Dorking and Horley)

Claire Young (Thornbury & Yate)

Clive Jones (Wokingham)

Daisy Cooper (St Albans)

Danny Chambers (Winchester)

Edward Morello (West Dorset)

Freddie van Mierlo (Henley and Thame)

Gideon Amos (Taunton and Wellington)

Helen Maguire (Epsom and Ewell)

Helen Morgan (North Shropshire)

Ian Roome (North Devon)

Ian Sollom (St Neots and Mid Cambridgeshire)

James MacCleary (Lewes)

Jess Brown-Fuller (Chichester)

John Milne (Horsham)

Josh Babarinde OBE (Eastbourne)

Layla Moran (Oxford West and Abingdon)

Lee Dillon (Newbury)

Liz Jarvis (Eastleigh)

Manuela Perteghella (Stratford-on-Avon)

Marie Goldman (Chelmsford)

Martin Wrigley (Newton Abbot)

Munira Wilson (Twickenham)

Dr Roz Savage (South Cotswolds)

Sarah Dyke (Glastonbury & Somerton)

Sarah Gibson (Chippenham)

Sarah Green (Chesham and Amersham)

Steff Aquarone (North Norfolk)

Steve Darling (Torbay)

Vikki Slade (Mid Dorset and North Poole)

Wera Hobhouse (Bath)

Will Forster (Woking)

Zöe Franklin (Guilford)