

Dear friend,

Looking good for 60...

“Your new National Health Service begins on 5th July...Everyone – rich or poor, man, woman or child – can use it or any part of it. There are no charges...There are no insurance qualifications...it will relieve your money worries in times of illness.”

I found these words on the original leaflet which was written in 1948 to publicise the creation of the brand new National Health Service. It is hard now to imagine just how radical they were. They heralded the creation of our country's greatest institution; a health service that is available to all based on need – not the ability to pay.

60 years on and the NHS is there throughout all of our lives. I was born in St George's Hospital in Tooting, as were my 2 children. Our local NHS has been a life saver for my family, and has also helped cure a very long list of minor illnesses and injuries for them and my friends.

When I was a lawyer I had colleagues who had private health care, but even they would go to their local A & E when they needed urgent medical care or to their local NHS hospital when they had a life threatening illness.

I still find it remarkable when I travel abroad just how special our health service is and how lucky we are to have it. It gives me a great sense of national pride.

The founder of the NHS, Welsh Labour MP Nye Bevan said, “Expectations will always exceed capacity. The service must always be changing, growing and improving.”

In that spirit, on Monday the Health Secretary Alan Johnson announced some important changes to the NHS that will benefit everyone. Many GP's surgeries will now be open for longer, and will have weekend surgeries. 100 new GP practices will be opened in the areas where they're most needed, and 152 new health centres will be opened that will be open 8am-8pm, seven days a week. This will not mean GP practices being forced to close down or merge as some have misleadingly suggested.

I was really pleased that there was almost an almost universal welcoming amongst experts when the new NHS constitution was announced this week.

This will mean that all patients will have access to the most clinically and cost effective drugs and treatment. Everyone in the country gets the best possible treatment, regardless of where they live – ending the 'postcode lottery'.

I remember campaigning for my good friend and predecessor as Tooting MP, Tom Cox, during the 1997 General Election campaign. With 18 month-plus waiting times the norm and buildings decaying fast, the issue then was whether the NHS had a future.

On its 60th birthday I am proud to be a member of a government that has brought it back from the brink, trebled investment, built hundreds of new hospitals and employed record numbers of doctors and nurses.

In Tooting this has meant, amongst other things, reduced waiting lists, improved care for stroke patients, new treatment facilities for cancer sufferers and a new maternity

unit at St George's. Primary Care provision has also benefited from a new walk-in centre (which now has extended opening hours) and many of our GP's practices have been refurbished to provide enhanced services.

Expectations will continue to rise and we must continue to change, grow and improve the NHS. But let's pause for a minute and be proud of what we've got (including the people who serve us in it). Here's to another 60 years – Happy Birthday NHS!

Furzedown Festival

We're just coming to the end of this year's Furzedown Festival, which has been excellent as ever. It kicked off with the Funday on the 21st June which was attended by thousands of visitors.

My family and I had a great day, as always, at this year's festival. My own contribution was to be in charge of the bouncy castle, which was good fun.

The festival finishes on Sunday 6th July, so you've still got time to attend some of the events before it finishes. It really is an excellent advert for all that is wonderful about Furzedown. I strongly recommend it.

For more information about the events visit:

www.fuzedown.net/festival.html

Until next time.

Best wishes,

Sadiq

P.S Some of you may have seen media reports about proposals to increase MP's pay. I'll write more about this next week, but would just like to let you know I voted against these proposals and am very pleased they were defeated.

To read more about my work in our community and in Westminster, read my diary by clicking [HERE](#)

CONTACTING ME

I hold four advice surgeries every month around the constituency. For more information about making an appointment and how to contact me click [HERE](#).

Whether it's a local issue or government policy, I'm here to help (whatever your politics). Click [HERE](#) for details of how to contact or meet me.

For more details on my work for Tooting constituency residents, please see my website: www.sadiqkhan.org.uk.

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