



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Dr Carolyn Wilkins  
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Our Ref: KHM/PARK02002/02162630

22 December 2016

Dear Dr Wilkins

Thank you for your letters of 15<sup>th</sup> November, received 28<sup>th</sup> November, regarding resolutions passed by the Full Council on 9<sup>th</sup> November on a range of issues.

On obesity, I agree with the Council that the Government's childhood obesity strategy which was published in August is a missed opportunity from the Government. This report has been delayed three times, and is a woefully inadequate response.

Obesity is ruining the quality of life for growing numbers of people, starting with children. In 2014/15 the Department of Health spent £5.1 billion on obesity related illnesses alone. The delayed, watered down strategy shows that the Government are failing to take the obesity crisis seriously, and it is the next generation who will pay the price. The evidence from other countries is that no single measure is a silver bullet, so it is disappointing that there is no proper co-ordinated action to improve children's health. I will continue to do what I can to support stronger legislation on this issue.

On community pharmacy funding, you may be aware that Labour called an Opposition Day Debate on this issue in November after the Government announced it was pushing ahead with huge cuts to community pharmacy budgets. The cuts represent a 12% reduction on current funding levels for the rest of the 2015-16 financial year and a 7% cut next year. The cost of these cuts will be enormous with a Government Minister admitting earlier this year that up to 3,000 community pharmacies could close as a result.

These cuts have been forced through despite opposition from the pharmacy sector, communities that rely on pharmacies and MPs. NHS funding and resources are already stretched to breaking point with A&E waits lengthening and GP appointments becoming harder and harder to come by. Pharmacy closures will only pile more pressure on a health service already in crisis. Labour will stand up against these unfair cuts and we will also be urging Tory MP's whose constituencies will be badly affected, to stand with us. I will continue to press for the reversal of the cuts in Parliament, alongside Shadow Cabinet colleagues.

Debbie Abrahams MP is proud to represent the people of  
Alexandra, Lees, Saddleworth, Shaw & Crompton, St Mary's, St James' and Waterhead

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On puppy farming, my Labour colleagues and I have long believed licensing requirements should be tightened in this area and that enforcement actions should be better targeted across the board.

While it has no plans to ban the sale of dogs by third parties, the Government is reviewing animal establishments licensing and has proposed tightening up the standards of welfare that apply to these sales. The Government has said it will publish, in due course, a document setting out its final proposals for modernising the animal activities licensing schemes. I hope that they will listen carefully and respond to the concerns that have been widely raised by organisations such as the International Fund for Animal Welfare, Battersea Dogs & Cats Home and the RSPCA, and act now to address the issue of puppy farming and to deter illegal dog breeding.

Breeding regulations must be brought into the 21st century and animal welfare standards should be applied to modern trading practices such as online trade. We also need to promote better education to encourage responsible dog ownership and breeding.

Thank you for also making me aware of the problems experienced in some parts of the Borough with noise and disturbance from agricultural tractors on public highways. I note that you have written on behalf of the Council to the Secretary of State for Transport and the DVLA on this issue. Please do let me know if there's anything further I can do to assist when you have received responses.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me about the Council's resolutions.

Yours sincerely



DEBBIE ABRAHAMS MP  
Oldham East and Saddleworth

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