



## Claire Darke

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March 2008

Dear Name

I know you will agree with me that the National Health Service is very important. I have been delighted with the response to my NHS Inquiry I recently carried out.

One of the key things to come out of the Inquiry is that our nurses, doctors and other health professionals are highly valued. The problem is with Labour's handling of the NHS, their mismanagement and amount of money being wasted. Many residents agreed with the Liberal Democrats and want to give more control over the NHS to local people - making decisions locally.

The Government is now trying to change GP surgery opening times, there is clearly a need for opening times to be flexible so that those who cannot attend during normal opening hours can see their doctor. However, the Government's approach to this issue has been hugely damaging; it has tried to impose a solution on GPs, rather than working with them to find a fair deal, and one which does not compromise the standard of care that GPs are able to provide.

Further, the Labour Government seems intent on forcing through a top-down, one-size-fits-all deal, rather than recognising that the demand for out of hours service will vary between different areas, and between different GP practices. The Government has failed to address these concerns. Instead Ministers appear desperate to create the impression that it is 'getting tough' with GPs by blaming them for problems with a contract that they themselves forced through only a few years ago. This contract not only resulted in an overspend of hundreds of millions of pounds, (over £250 million when it was introduced in 2004) but, according to the Health Select Committee, despite the scale of this investment the new contract failed to demonstrate corresponding benefits to patients.

The Liberal Democrats in Parliament are pressing the Government to work with doctors to ensure that more flexible working practises can be achieved with the appropriate resources, balanced according to local need, and without compromising patient care.

Yours Sincerely,

Claire Darke

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Liberal Democrat Candidate for Park Ward

Ps. Only the Liberal Democrats want to give more control over the NHS to local people - making decisions locally.