

Westminster *Diary*

By Steve Brine, MP for
Winchester & Chandler's Ford

MY constituents will be very aware by now of my interest in all matters relating to the health service.

I said from day one it would be my priority, and I've remained true to that promise; both in Westminster and locally where I've immersed myself in really understanding the issues.

The local health economy is hugely complicated, but I've enjoyed the challenge of understanding how it works, its challenges and external pressures. That understanding includes, of course, the acute trust and discussions being had about a possible reconfiguration of hospital services at RHCH.

As our MP, I welcome a £160m trust investment in local services because I want the best for us, but this one has a long way to run and my constant challenge to local clinicians is to convince us why the mooted new critical treatment hospital will be better, including in obstetric and maternity care where I still have many concerns. That is why I organised and chaired two big public meetings last year to give constituents the chance to question the key people.

Above all, I am trying to understand the health economy across our entire area and



seeing how that fits together in the context of the newly-fashioned NHS for the long-term benefit of the people I represent.

Equally, the NHS is not just about hospitals; I want us to

benefit from new investment as well as be at the forefront of a drive for better outcomes on cancer and long-term conditions for instance.

Through my work with breast cancer in Parliament these past five years, I know how much more we can do.

Furthermore, we need to manage sustainable access to primary care and it's never wasted time to sit down with local GPs and discuss where Government can help and where it most certainly does not.

I did that with the partners at the Gratton Surgery in Sutton Scotney recently which was really useful.

It is also about the integration of NHS and social

care and there are great things happening locally.

I visited Westholme on Harestock Road to see the new 'hub' facility which, working with the NHS, helps get elderly people out of hospital into a place where they can make sensible decisions about their long-term future.

And finally, it's definitely about parity for mental health care locally; making sure we treat a mental illness no differently to a physical one.

I met with MIND recently to discuss the Care Crisis Concordat which is a new agreement between services and agencies involved in the care and support of people in crisis.

It sets out how organisations will work together better to make sure that people get the help they need when they are having a mental health crisis.

It's very important we make this Concordat work and it's integrated with the many excellent charities we have in this field, including the Winchester Befrienders who came to see me the other day. You can connect with them via www.befriendersofwinchester.com.

You can find out more about my work, locally and in Westminster, and get in touch via 01962 791110 or www.stevebrine.com.