

## Letter from Westminster



**Steve Brine MP -  
Rat infestation in**

A constituent stopped me in the supermarket the other day and asked whether we are back in Parliament after last month's General Election. The answer (for the record) is absolutely; MPs returned to the House on the Monday after

polling day and, for me, it's been a return to my old job in many ways but also pastures new as I take up my new role in Government at the Department of Health.

I said during the campaign it would always be priority NHS for me so I am pleased to be working alongside Jeremy Hunt and it's been a busy start as last Friday the Health Secretary announced the first step in our 'new deal for GPs', delivering on our manifesto commitment to offer seven-day access to GP appointments.

Since 2010 the number of GPs has increased by 5 per cent with an additional 1,700 GPs working or in training, delivering an estimated 45 million more appointments per year than in 2010. We are also investing £1 billion over four years into improving buildings. However, we must go further to meet the demands of an ageing population and that is why we will invest in 10,000 more clinical staff at GP surgeries, including 5,000 more doctors.

Local people will know that I believe passionately the NHS is something to be valued, protected and improved – but you can only have a well-funded NHS with a strong economy. Illness doesn't just happen on weekdays, so we want everyone to be able to access GP services seven-days-a-week.

My determination is we will do this by working in a way that is credible to patients and obviously those actually delivering primary care. I am already receiving feedback on this 'new deal' from constituency GP practices and look forward to receiving their ongoing comment.

Locally, and while we know we have some of the best schools in the country, it's not universal so we want to do better. Every child has the right to be achieve their potential and good or outstanding schools are a good place to start. So I was pleased to visit Oliver's Battery Primary School last Friday, truly a school on the up after many difficult years.

New head Fey Wood is no stranger to a challenge and it was good to hear details of the turnaround plan ahead of the next Ofsted inspection this Autumn as well as to meet many of the children. I look forward to working further with the Senior Leadership Team over the coming months and years.

Meanwhile, tomorrow I am visiting the new Westgate Lower School, as they hold an open day. Our school places campaign in the last Parliament led to £10m of investment from Hampshire County Council in Winchester schools to meet an acute shortage of primary school places and it's always good to see bricks and mortar on the ground. I'm also very proud to have Hampshire's first 'all-through' school in the city.

Finally for this time, I am once again throwing open my allocations of PMQs tickets to my constituents in a series of free and fair ballots. I did this throughout the last Parliament, and so many people had the opportunity to see this weekly event live. Although we don't yet know who David Cameron will be facing across the despatch box, I suspect demand will be similarly high. Do visit [www.stevebrine.com/PMQs](http://www.stevebrine.com/PMQs) or call 01962 791110 if you wish to take part.