

Dear (insert name of your MP)

I am a patient at Stoke Road Surgery, in Bishops Cleeve. The partners have recently sent out a communication to their patients informing them that due to government funding cuts they can no longer provide us with the standard of clinical care that they want to (and used to provide).

The surgery provides services for over 10,000 patients and as there is no hospital in the town, we rely on it for all our health care needs. It provides phlebotomy services as well as acute illness and specialist chronic disease clinics.

Over the last few years, the financial pressures on the surgery have increased. Staff costs, energy costs and the cost of disposable items used every day have spiralled. The funding from the government however has remained static at approximately 1% compared to inflation which, at times, has been over 10%. The medical centre is now working with fewer administrative and clinical staff in an effort to stay financially viable. This means that they are unable to offer the same number of appointments for either acute or chronic care.

On top of this the practice is managing more work that is being passed down from the hospitals, and patients also require more appointments for drug and disease monitoring. If anything, patients need MORE appointments, not less.

As a patient I rely on having a local practice where the GPs know me and my health needs. If the practice runs out of urgent on the day appointments and I have to attend Cheltenham hospital, it costs me around £20 each way in a taxi.

The government needs to urgently invest more money in general practice: In real terms general practice funding has been slashed by over £350million since 2019 despite a backdrop of record patient demand. In addition, the GP share of NHS spend has fallen to an eight year low despite providing 90% of the country's healthcare. As of February 2023, 20% of the county's surgeries are struggling with finances and having to cut services.

We do not want to see primary care go the same way as NHS dentistry in England.

In an election year we are urgently requesting that you write to Victoria Atkins MP, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, to highlight the struggle that we are facing in Bishop's Cleeve, and to urge her party to prioritise primary care, the bedrock of the NHS model of care.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.