

View from the House.

The last few days of Parliament before the summer recess were dominated by Health and Social Care followed by Health questions to the Secretary of State.

During the debate I asked the Minister Simon Burns whether referrals by GPs and A and E admissions had gone up or down. He indicated that only A and E admissions had gone up when in fact the Department of Health's own website said they had both gone up.

On the last day, The Secretary of State gave evidence to the Health Select Committee of which I am a member on the White paper on Social Care. The Government have said they accept the main recommendations of the Dilnott Commission but have not indicated how this will be funded. With 10 million people in the UK over 65 years old this is a pressing issue.

The Government have transferred money to the local authorities; £2 billion for 2014-2015 for social care; a one off payment of £150 million in 2011/2012 for people coming out of hospital; an additional £100 million in 2013-2014 and £200 million in 2014-2015 for integrated care. A further £200 million for specialist housing for adults. I asked the Secretary of State what measures he had in place to ensure local authorities spent these extra resources on Social Care. He did not appear to have an answer.

I was pleased to invite the Shadow Housing Minister Jack Dromey MP to look at the new homes being built by Accord Housing at Whitworth Close, Darlaston. The visionary development combines low carbon technologies, which reduces energy bills up to 50%, with a cooperative model which will give residents a real stake in their own communities. These homes are constructed from timber panels with plumbing, wiring and windows, manufactured at Accord's factory in Walsall.

I support reform of the House of Lords, but the Government's Bill is flawed. I do not agree with all the provisions. The programme motion which set out the timetable for debate was withdrawn by the Government. And as this is a major constitutional issue, I consider there should be a referendum.

Locally, I will keep pressing for a Signal Controlled crossing on Darlaston Road in Pleck. I raised this in Parliament. A child has been knocked down and a woman suffered broken bones. Even when drivers have stopped there have been collisions. Traffic will flow and people will be safer with a Signal Controlled crossing.

Valerie Vaz MP
22 July 2012