

*The Petition of residents of the constituency of North East Hertfordshire,*

Declares that patients who are residents of Letchworth Garden City and the surrounding towns and villages have to travel to Mount Vernon Hospital in Hillingdon to receive radiotherapy treatment and that this journey is long and exacting and often has to be made on consecutive days.

The Petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urges the Government to encourage NHS England to provide a radiotherapy facility at Lister Hospital in Stevenage in order to make the journey for radiotherapy treatment much easier for patients who live in Letchworth Garden City and the surrounding towns and villages.

And the Petitioners remain, etc.—[Presented by Sir Oliver Heald, *Official Report*, 10 March 2015; Vol. 594, c. 266 .]

[P001441]

*Observations from the Secretary of State for Health:*

Decisions about local services should be made as close to patients as possible, by those who are best placed to work with the patients and the public to understand their needs. Because it is a specialised service, radiotherapy is commissioned directly by NHS England.

NHS England has carried out a high-level exercise to assess capacity and demand for External Beam Radiotherapy generally at a national level. A further phase of work will also take place at a local level shortly and will include the launch of a radiotherapy capacity and demand survey.

On 12 March 2015, the Public Accounts Committee published “Progress in improving cancer services and outcomes in England”. One of the recommendations in the report is that NHS England should set out how it will ensure a co-ordinated national approach to procuring replacement radiotherapy equipment so that sufficient capacity is available in the right places.

NHS England will develop a plan to respond to this recommendation and the radiotherapy capacity and demand survey will be the first step in this process.

NHS England will continue to review the need for additional radiotherapy facilities outside the current centres if it benefits sufficient numbers of patients and will ensure that any changes are economically viable and enhance the existing care pathways.

The hon. Member for Stevenage (Stephen McPartland) and the hon. and learned Member for North East Hertfordshire (Sir Oliver Heald) are meeting NHS England representatives shortly to discuss the provision of radiotherapy services locally, which is the appropriate course of action.