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*Dear Mr. Dilnot,*

I wanted to respond to your letter of 4 December 2012 about NHS spending. As your letter confirms, the most recent figures show that spending on the NHS increased in real terms between 2010-11 and 2011-12.

The comments made by both myself and the Prime Minister have been in reference to this increase, and as this is the first year of the Coalition Government's spending settlement, which was set out in October 2010, it shows that we are indeed delivering on our commitment to real term increases in NHS spending.

The spending settlement for 2010/11 was set out by the previous Government - indeed, the financial year 2010/11 had already begun when the Coalition Government was formed on 11 May 2010 - and as a result it would be wrong to hold the Coalition Government to account for its level.

It is also worth noting that the Shadow Health Secretary has himself made some inaccurate statements about NHS spending. In his response to your letter he said, "He [the Prime Minister] has cut the NHS budget for two years running". Not only is he conflating the issue of the NHS budget and NHS spending, he is also ignoring your letter which shows NHS spending increased in 2011/12.

I do however accept that there are some questions around definition and that consequently it would be helpful if we were consistent in the definitions we used. The Conservative Party website previously stated that "we have increased the NHS budget in real terms in each of the last two years". While this again is correct, the NHS budget has increased in

both 11/12 and 12/13, it would be better if it were consistent with what I and the Prime Minister have previously stated, which is that NHS spending would increase. Consequently, I have asked the Conservative Party to amend its website accordingly.

*Yours sincerely,*

*Jeremy*

**JEREMY HUNT**