



Sir,

Chris Smyth (The Times Whitehall editor) writes ([Darzi report: money alone won't cure the NHS, 12 September](#)) that "those close to Wes Streeting are already talking about phasing out independent contractor status of GPs" to provide incentives for health chiefs to put more money into local surgeries.

Have the Secretary of State's advisers, and Chris Smyth, actually read Lord Darzi's [report](#)? On page 80 he writes that "as independent businesses, general practices have the best financial discipline in the health service family." This is because practices cannot run up large deficits "in the belief that they will be bailed out" like large Foundation Trust hospitals.

Lord Darzi also remarks that the standard GP contracts are complex and "can mean that doing the right thing for patients can require doing the wrong thing for GP income. That cannot be right."

I completely agree with Lord Darzi and have been making these arguments for well over a decade.

Is there anybody in the Department of Health and NHS England who is reading and listening?

Dr Richard West MBE

Chairman, Dispensing Doctors' Association

Senior Partner, Woolpit Health Centre, Stowmarket, Suffolk