

Rt. Hon. Jeremy Hunt MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

16 November 2023

Dear Chancellor,

Funding to support orthopaedic surgery in Autumn Statement

We write because we are gravely concerned by the widely reported decision by the Treasury not to fund the over £1 billion deficit within the NHS caused by industrial action and continued inflation.

Recent analysis suggests such a move will make it impossible to deliver the Prime Minister's commitment to cut NHS waiting lists.

It will put appalling pressure on orthopaedic services during what will be another very difficult winter for the NHS. Once again hundreds of thousands of people, many with arthritis, will be denied necessary and life-changing procedures like hip and knee replacements. These operations can be fundamental in helping patients return to their everyday lives.

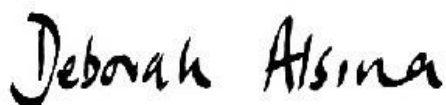
People with arthritis tell us they feel forgotten and are no longer confident they will receive the support nor the treatment they need. Every day of waiting is a day with unimaginable pain, which can prevent people from being able to work, to live independently, or to provide care for frail elderly relatives and young families. For many this is having a significant detrimental impact on their mental health.

When crisis hits the NHS, the first port of call is to cancel elective orthopaedic procedures like joint replacement surgery. Put simply, these procedures are not "elective"; they are "planned essential care" that people cannot live their lives without. Cancelling them, often at short notice, has a devastating impact on a patients' health, wellbeing, and economic activity.

The Treasury's decision to deny NHS England the necessary funding that will enable orthopaedic services to treat those that have already waited for far too long will only prolong this painful cycle. It will simply reinforce the message that orthopaedic patients are not a priority - despite being part of the largest group on the published waiting lists.

To restore hope to people with arthritis, we would urge the Government to use the Autumn Statement to commit to delivering the treatment and care people need, when they need it.

Yours sincerely,



Deborah Alsina MBE
Chief Executive

VERSUS
ARTHRITIS



Simon Hodkinson
President



British
Orthopaedic
Association