South-West England (Long-Term Economic Plan)

Sarah Wollaston Conservative, Totnes

Does my right hon. Friend agree that when it comes to local authority and health funding, there is not only the higher cost of delivery in rural areas, but the fact that we have a higher age demographic in Devon and much greater need, which is not reflected in the current formula?

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Liam Fox Conservative, North Somerset

My hon. Friend, typically, makes an excellent point. We are a part of the country that is a very attractive place for people to go to when they retire, but that brings its own financial problems for funding our local facilities. My hon. Friend is all too aware of the fact that as we get a more elderly population, that brings with it more complex medical needs. It is the complexity of the medical needs that adds to the cost, as well as the number of individuals involved, and that will continue to rise, so we must have a proper match between the funding and the demand if we are to be able to cope with the pressures that are coming.

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