Sarah Wollaston Chair, Health Committee

This is undoubtedly a very serious incident, but I welcome the detailed and thorough steps that the Secretary of State has taken to protect patient safety. However, he will know that there are ongoing problems with the transfer of patient records. GPs and hospitals spend endless hours chasing up results, investigations and letters on a daily basis. Is it not time that patients were given direct control of their own records, and will the Secretary of State provide an update on that to the House?

Jeremy Hunt The Secretary of State for Health

I thank my hon. Friend for her sensible contribution. She is right that, although the process of sending on these particular documents has been taken in-house, other parts of the contract were taken on by a company called Capitaâ€”[Interruption.] Jonathan Ashworth cannot stop, can he? Let me repeat that the work in question has been taken in-house. The other work, which is being done by Capita, has had some teething problems, of which we are very aware. We know it has been causing problems for GPs. The Under-Secretary of State for Health, my hon. Friend Nicola Blackwood has been meeting Capita and people relating to that contract on a fortnightly basis to try to identify the problems.

My hon. Friend Dr Wollaston is right that the aim in the long run is to give people control of their records. I am proud that, under this Government, we have become the first country in the world to give every patient access to their own records online. From September, people will be able to do that without having to go to their GP’s surgery.