Sarah Wollaston (Totnes, Conservative) Click here to watch Sarah speak

The public will be horrified, but probably not surprised, to hear that Ministers were leaning on the CQC not to criticise NHS hospitals. Leadership has to start at the top, so will the Secretary of State confirm that he will be fearless in standing up for whistleblowers and those protecting patients in the NHS? [Interruption.]

Jeremy Hunt (South West Surrey, Conservative)

I thank my hon. Friend for that. She is absolutely right to say that the biggest responsibility Ministers have when faced with such tragedies to be open and transparent about the scale of the problems; otherwise, they will never be addressed. Let me put it this way: people who love the NHS and are proud of it are the people who most want to sort out these problems when they arise. That is why it is incredibly important that we are open and candid. [Interruption.] Andy Burnham has stood up and criticised me in the media every single time I have given a speech drawing attention to some of the problems facing the NHS. He needs to be very careful every time he does that, because I will continue to do this, and I do it because I want the NHS to get better and believe it can be better.

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