

Margot goes to Parliament in fight over patient care

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A MUSCULAR dystrophy patient from Derby will visit the Houses of Parliament to demand more local services for people with the condition.

Margot Keats has been invited to give evidence to a group of MPs on Tuesday about care available in the East Midlands.

The same group of MPs published a report in August last year, which raised a number of concerns about regional NHS services for people with the muscle disease.

Now the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Muscular Dystrophy wants to know whether improvements have been made.

Mrs Keats gave evidence to the MPs last year and the group also heard evidence from her brother, Andy Findlay, of Stoneyhurst Court, Shelton Lock.



The Derby Telegraph reported in October that Mr Findlay was calling for a specialist muscle centre in the East Midlands.

Mrs Keats said that would be one of the issues she raised at next week's meeting.

She said she would call for more spending on preventative care to ensure that fewer people needed to be taken into hospital for emergency treatment. Prevention would be cheaper than emergency care, she said.

The 62-year-old, of Evans Avenue, Allestree, said: "I'll be calling for a muscle centre with specialists who know about the condition and could offer information and diagnosis."

Representatives of the East Midlands Specialised Commissioning Group, which pays for specialist NHS services in the region, will also be at the meeting. Nobody from the group was available for comment.

Last summer's report called for an urgent review of services for people with muscle conditions across the East Midlands and for an NHS staff member to be responsible for the development of services.

The call came after MPs found children in Derby with muscular dystrophy faced an average six-month wait for powered wheelchairs.

They also learned the East Midlands only had one regional care adviser to support muscle-condition patients – a post paid for by charity The Muscular Dystrophy Campaign.

Last summer the charity warned it could not afford to continue funding it.

Nic Bungay, head of policy and campaigns at the charity, said some improvements had been made but argued that more were needed.

He said: "The NHS has agreed to fund the post of the regional care adviser. But having one care adviser simply isn't enough. The south west, which has a similar size population, has

five. our evidence is that provision of powered wheelchairs hasn't improved."



giving evidence: Margot Keats, of Allestree, will speak to a group of MPs about muscular dystrophy services.

