

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP**  
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

30<sup>th</sup> April 2019

*Dear Constance,*

**RE: NSPCC 'CLOSE THE LOOPHOLE' CAMPAIGN.**

Thank you for contacting me recently about the *Sexual Offences Act 2003*; your comments upon which I read with great interest.

I share your concern about this hugely important issue and I agree that the protection of children and young people must remain a priority. I want to pay tribute to those who have spoken out about child sexual abuse.

As I am sure you are aware, sexual activity with a child under the age of 16 is a serious criminal offence, regardless of whether consent is given. It is also the case that any non-consensual sexual activity is a crime. It doesn't matter the age of the victim or the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. I understand it is also the case that where a manipulative offender grooms a child under the age of consent and then engages in a sexual relationship with them when they are over 16, offences are in place to deal with this such as Section 15A of the *Sexual Offences Act 2003*.

I do welcome the fact that the *Sexual Offences Act 2003* also provides increased protection for younger people aged 16 and 17. Offences criminalise those in a position of trust who sexually abuse young people in their care. The offences target relationships where the young person has some dependency on the adult involved and often combined with an element of vulnerability of that young person.

I have been assured that Ministers across the Government are keeping this sensitive and important area of the law under review and are working together to ensure our young athletes feel safe in their training environment.

I hope this reassures you that the Government is committed to doing all it can to protect children and young people.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

*With best wishes,*

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP**  
**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT**  
**CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**