



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

3<sup>rd</sup> June 2020

*Jean Constant,*

**RE: ARTHRITIS**

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of arthritis, which I know can be a very painful and debilitating condition; your comments upon which I have read with great interest.

I completely agree that aids and adaptations can greatly enhance the quality of life for people with arthritis. An independent review of the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG), which supports disabled people on low incomes, was undertaken in 2018. You may be pleased to know this review considered how the DFG may need to adapt to changing innovation and technology in the aids and adaptations market. The Department of Health and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is analysing these recommendations, and I look forward to studying their conclusions.

Funding for the DFG increased from £220 million in 2015 to 2016 to £431 million in 2017 to 2018, and now stands at £505 million for 2020 to 2021. However, I recognise there is more to do. Clinical guidelines for arthritis currently highlight the importance of self-management, and to help patients manage their condition, and live as independently as possible.

I also know that the Department for Work and Pensions ensures that people with arthritis applying for Personal Independence Payments are able to specify whether they need specific aids to help them with daily, physical tasks – making sure that they get the right support to improve their quality of life while maintaining their independence.

As I am sure you are aware, the NHS is being provided with an additional £33.9 billion by 2023/24; this is the largest, longest funding settlement in the history of the NHS. This landmark investment to help secure the long term future of our NHS is extremely welcome, and I hope you agree it demonstrates the Government's commitment to properly funding our NHS and public services: health is the Government's top priority.

Alongside this, the NHS was asked to undertake a clinical review of standards relating to waiting times. This must be clinically led to enable best, and safest, delivery of care for patients. I understand that NHS England has now prepared proposals, covering waiting times across the service, including elective procedures, mental health, cancer, and A&E.



I understand that the recommendations following this review have been deferred as part of the NHS response to the Covid-19 pandemic, which is understandable. I will be sure to study these in due course.

I know that, while it has been important to postpone some NHS activities to protect individuals and enable resources to be used as efficiently as possible, my colleagues in the Department of Health and Social Care, as well as NHS Staff, are determined to restart elective procedures as soon as it is safe to do so. I was delighted when the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care announced on 27<sup>th</sup> April that, from the following day, NHS services began restarting, including the most urgent, like cancer care and mental health support. The exact pace of this restoration is determined by local circumstances, according to local need and demand, and according to the number of coronavirus cases being dealt with by the hospital.

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,*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tom Pursglove'.

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