

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

13th May 2020

Dear Constance,

RE: CORONAVIRUS - DEATH STATISTICS IN CARE HOMES.

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of the statistics for the number of people who have sadly died in care homes as a result of COVID-19; your comments upon which I have read with great interest and my thoughts are with all those who have lost loved ones owing to this dreadful disease.

It is vital at this time that the Government continues to update the public with the latest advice and information as regularly as possible, which is why I welcome the daily news conferences, as well as the Secretary of State for Health & Social Care's regular statements in Parliament, ensuring that the press, the public and MPs have plenty of opportunities to ask questions and seek further information.

When discussing statistics, it is extremely important that we compare data drawn from comparable and reliable sources. The number of people who have died in hospital settings is being released by the Department of Health & Social Care on a daily basis: I know that the Office for National Statistics and the Care Quality Commission are collecting data on a different basis from the NHS, and as such, the numbers cannot be reported alongside each other without a number of important caveats.

We must also consider scientific guidance as to how to interpret these statistics. For example, COVID-19 is what is known as a notifiable disease, which means that cases and deaths have to be reported. The reported numbers of deaths do not, however, explain whether the virus is the major cause, a contributory factor, or simply present when a patient is dying of something else. I welcome that scientists and researchers are thoroughly exploring the data to increase our understanding of the information, and I will continue to closely follow this issue.

More broadly, I genuinely believe that the Government is taking all appropriate steps to try and protect and shield the public from this global disease, as far as we are able, and it is the case that we have global experts leading and informing the UK's response. That response is informed by the science and is evidence-based. We are also providing a comprehensive package of support to help people, businesses, public services and communities through this challenging period, which is constantly kept under review and will undoubtedly be responsive to the changing circumstances ahead.

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'.

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE