

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

15th June 2020

New Contact,

RE: CORONAVIRUS - SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.

Thank you for contacting me recently about support for people with disabilities during the Coronavirus emergency; your comments upon which I have read with great interest.

It troubles me that so many people with disabilities feel forgotten about during this crisis. As well as addressing this, we must ensure rights are not eroded and also look for opportunities to change things for the better and for good. I am assured that the Department for Work & Pensions and the Government Equalities Office are aware of this report.

Local authorities are providing support to those people on the National Shielding List in the form of essential grocery supplies and social contact. People who are shielding are also entitled to priority supermarket delivery slots and medicine delivery. The list is maintained by the National Shielding Service. If you are not on the list and think you should be, there are details on the gov.uk website advising you how to register, either online or by phone. You can also register via your local council's website. This information is available on the gov.uk and NHS websites.

Regarding welfare, the Government acted quickly to suspend all face-to-face assessments for health and disability-related benefits, while also extending award periods, giving people peace of mind that their benefit payments would continue. I am encouraged that Ministers are protecting the health of individuals claiming these benefits, many of whom are likely to be at greater risk of severe Coronavirus symptoms owing to their pre-existing health conditions.

My understanding is that the measures in the *Coronavirus Act* are temporary and I believe they are proportionate to the threat we face. It is important that they will only be used when strictly necessary and will only be in place for as long as required to respond to the public health emergency. Local authorities will still be expected to do as much as they can to comply with their duties to meet needs during this period, and the legislation does not remove the duty of care towards an individual's risk of serious neglect or harm. The legislation must not be used as cover for negating basic duties.

There are also opportunities for positive change. The way many of us work has, for example, changed. Increasing the ability for individuals to work from home, and putting in place other adjustments, is one way we can emerge from this into a world which better embraces and supports people with disabilities.

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

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