

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

3rd June 2019

Dear Constance,

RE: FOOD BANKS – EDM 141.

Thank you for contacting me recently about food banks, with specific reference to Early Day Motion (EDM) 141; your comments upon which I read with great interest.

Notwithstanding the fact that as a Government Minister I am unable to sign EDMs, in any event, I have general concerns about the effectiveness and expense of the EDM system, and I think it is much more effective to raise concerns directly with Ministers, both verbally, and in writing, rather than signing EDMs.

I agree with you that this is a serious issue, and it is vital that we do everything possible to help people with the cost of living. The Government is working hard to improve competition to help producers and retailers offer the best prices. They are working to promote a growing, sustainable, food and farming sector and keep prices down.

I am aware that people use food banks for many and varied reasons. The Government continues to provide a strong safety net through the welfare system for those who need extra support. Research carried out by organisations, including the Trussell Trust, is regularly reviewed to add to the understanding of food bank use and I am encouraged to hear that Ministers intend to work more closely with the Trussell Trust and other food bank providers to help give a better understanding of the issue. This will allow the Government to put in place appropriate interventions to make the situation better.

The welfare system supports millions of people who are on low incomes or who are unemployed, so nobody has to struggle to meet their basic needs, but I passionately believe that the surest route out of poverty is work. I am delighted that the Government is dedicated to building an economy that works for everyone, and has overseen falls in unemployment, record numbers of jobs, pay cheques rising faster than inflation and income tax cut so that working people keep more of what they earn. I look forward to this record continuing.

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