



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**

LONDON SW1A 0AA

14<sup>th</sup> August 2020

*Dear Constance,*

**RE: CHILDREN WITH CANCER & THE CHARITY SECTOR.**

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of children who are suffering with cancer; your comments upon which I have read with compassion and great interest.

Any child suffering with cancer is devastating to learn about and so, firstly, I'd like to assure you that improving outcomes for patients diagnosed with this disease remains a key NHS priority.

Childhood cancers, thankfully, are extremely rare, accounting for 0.5 percent of all cancers in the UK, with around one child in every 500 developing some form of cancer by the age of 14.

Of course, even one case is very sad, and my deepest sympathies go out to every family dealing with such a challenging situation. Improving cancer outcomes, including for children, is a major priority for the Government. I am incredibly supportive of the £1.2 billion investment which the Government put into the Cancer Drugs Fund which helped 95,000 people, including children, to access the latest and most innovative cancer drugs.

In 2012, the Government announced a £250 million investment to build proton beam therapy (PBT) facilities at the Christie Hospital and at University College London Hospitals (UCLH). The Christie Hospital is already treating patients, and UCLH is due to open this year. PBT is a more directed form of radiation therapy, which means that higher doses can be delivered with fewer side effects and fewer long-term consequences, which is particularly important for paediatric patients.

In October 2018, the then Prime Minister announced measures that will be rolled-out across the country with the aim of seeing three quarters of all cancers detected at an early stage by 2028 (currently just over half are detected at an early stage). The plan will overhaul screening programmes, provide new investment in state of the art technology to transform the process of diagnosis, and boost research and innovation. This is part of the *NHS Long Term Plan*, published in January 2019, and forms part of how the Government will achieve its ambition to see 55,000 more people surviving cancer for five years in England each year from 2028.

Like you, I realise that our charities have been affected by COVID-19. I know what a worrying time this is for many charities just at the point when many are needed most. As you are probably aware, the Chancellor, the Rt. Hon Rishi Sunak MP, announced an unprecedented £750 million package of support specifically for charities, to help them continue playing a full role in our response to COVID-19: some twenty times the support made available during the financial crisis.

In addition, funds raised between the 18th July and the 31st August through selected Coronavirus charity campaigns are being matched pound-for-pound through the new 'Community Match Challenge'. Funders, foundations and philanthropists, whose Coronavirus campaigns have raised millions for the most vulnerable since the pandemic struck, have been invited to apply for a share of £85 million to match their donations to good causes.





The Charity Commission and Fundraising Regulator have urged people to continue to give to charities, to help them support people affected by COVID-19. The regulators are encouraging people to support registered charities, including the National Emergencies Trust (NET) national Coronavirus fundraising appeal, launched on the 18th March. The funds raised via the NET appeal will be channelled through trusted and reputable organisations, so donors can be sure they are giving to those who need it the most.

I also know that certain fundraising organisations, such as the National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF), are dedicating their operations to the COVID-19 response for the coming months. I welcome that the NLCF has decided that between March and August all funding decisions, worth up to £300 million of National Lottery funding, will be devoted to addressing the current crisis.

I hope this response and the measures contained in it will offer you some reassurance through these difficult times.

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**