



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

27th August 2021

Jean Conthreut,

RE: DISABLED CHILDREN

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of health and social care services for disabled children and their families; your comments upon which I have read with great interest and compassion.

I am determined that disabled children and their families in Corby & East Northamptonshire should receive the support they need to lead fulfilling lives and be part of the community. I wholly support the excellent work this campaign is doing to highlight the reality of the challenges disabled children, young people and their families face in living a life many of us take for granted.

I can only imagine the additional challenges for disabled children and their families during the pandemic, and I welcome the work of the Disabled Children's Partnership in highlighting this issue through the 'Left in Lockdown' campaign.

As part of the *COVID-19 Mental Health & Wellbeing Recovery Action Plan*, the Government announced £79 million of funding to improve access to mental health services for children and young people, including disabled children. This includes additional funding for Mental Health Support Teams in schools and colleges. Funding is also provided for respite care.

Furthermore, supporting children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families is a priority for this Government, and their educational, physical and mental wellbeing remains central to our cross-government response to the COVID-19 outbreak. That is why education settings remained open for children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) throughout periods of national 'lockdown'. Moreover, I welcome that the *National Disability Strategy* will invest £300 million to create places, improve existing provision in schools, and make accessibility adaptations for children and young people with SEND.

The return to school for all pupils was prioritised owing to the significant and proven impact caused by being out of school, including on wellbeing. The support schools provided to their pupils as they returned to face-to-face education included time devoted to supporting wellbeing, which plays a fundamental part in supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing recovery.



The expectations for schools in this regard were set out clearly in the main Department for Education guidance to schools, which also signposts further support, and which is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>

Thank you for offering me the opportunity to learn more by attending the DCP event on the 10th September 2021. Unfortunately, I am unable to attend, owing to prior constituency commitments, but I would welcome any further information you could share with me about this important issue.

I am encouraged by the commitment to improve opportunities and life chances for all children and young people, and I know that health and care services play an integral part in achieving this.

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**