



Marie Rimmer CBE, MP
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Dear Constituent,

People with learning disabilities should be afforded the standard of care that they need throughout this pandemic. Yet some of the most vulnerable people have borne the brunt of the coronavirus. I was deeply concerned by Public Health England's report which found that deaths of people identified as having learning disabilities with COVID-19 in England was up to six times higher compared to the general population.

I know that the learning disability charity Mencap has raised concerns about the Government's decision to relax local authorities' duties under the Care Act during the pandemic. I do not believe that reducing care and support to people with a disability who need care, using the easements or not, is the right course of action. The Government must commit to switching off the Care Act easements as soon as possible.

More widely, I share your concerns that, for too long, social care has lacked the priority, attention and funding it deserves. Despite the best efforts of care workers, NHS staff and unpaid carers - who have gone the extra mile to care for vulnerable people - this pandemic has exposed the underlying problems with our social care system. I believe long-term reform is essential.

The Association of Directors of Adult Social Services estimates that, following a decade of cuts to local government, £8 billion has been lost from adult social care budgets since 2010 and too many people have been left to cope without the support they need. Councils now face £6.6 billion in extra costs due to the pandemic, yet the Government has repeatedly delayed setting out its plan to fix social care.

I believe the Government should bring forward a plan to put social care services on a sustainable footing, with care providers compensated for additional costs as a result of COVID-19.

Beyond the pandemic, long-term reform of the social care system is urgently needed. This is vital to support people with learning disabilities to live in their own homes instead of inappropriate inpatient units. Ministers should also address widespread vacancies across social care, invest in our care workforce and provide greater support for unpaid carers.

Yours sincerely,

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