Your address

Date

Dear [Name of your MP]

**RE: People with Learning Disabilities experiences of the pandemic**

Throughout the pandemic, it has been clear that marginalised groups have been disproportionally impacted by COVID-19. The 1.5 million people with learning disabilities in the UK continue to be one of these impacted communities.

The latest reports from Public Health England and the Bristol University learning from deaths review estimates that people with learning disabilities are dying at 3.6 – 6 times the rate of the general population. These reports show the impact of a lack of appropriate support, correct health care treatment including reasonable adjustments and the critical lack of accessible information.

I believe people with learning disabilities and their families have been excluded and forgotten in debates, planning, and policy.

[write a few sentences about your or your families experience of the pandemic]

Recently, the Learning Disability and Autism Advisory Group for the Governments Social Care Taskforce published their report on what needs to be done to support people through the pandemic.

They make the following recommendations which I think are incredibly important.

The Advisory Groups highest priority recommendations are that the government should:

1. Commit to accessible guidance and communications for people with learning disabilities and autistic people, and their families, being issued with or very soon after all future COVID-19 guidance. This can be achieved by
   1. coproducing a library of easy-read and accessible8 COVID-19 information for people and services, as their local areas move in and out of lockdown,
   2. a nationally funded programme of digital inclusion to give people living at home or in services the right skills, equipment, and broadband, and
   3. resourcing councils and CCGs to fund local self-advocacy and community groups to help people understand the rules and changes.
2. Restore, maintain, and adapt the support for individuals and families already assessed as having eligible needs. This means ensuring councils and CCGs
   1. pause care, health, or personal budget reviews during the period of service disruption, unless requested by the individual,
   2. make independent advocacy available wherever a change to support or an institutional care package is suggested, with support to identify and organise a community alternative for the same cost.
3. Urgently identify and provide the level of resources needed for councils or CCGs to financially stabilise provider organisations at risk of collapse; coproduce with providers a workforce plan for social care; expand funding for and availability of PPE, testing programmes, and the Better Health in Care Homes programme from care homes to the whole provider sector (and individual employers using direct payments), and grow the most effective and personalised forms of community support.
4. Reduce isolation and loneliness for people with learning disabilities, autistic people and their families, through
   1. expanding the reach of NHS and other volunteering programmes, and COVID-19 hubs, to people with learning disabilities and autistic people, and
   2. investing in a national awareness campaign encouraging and enabling communities and mutual aid groups to be more inclusive and supportive.
5. Reach individuals and families who don’t receive social care support or organise their own, but who are isolated or in crisis. This means ensuring councils, CCGs and local VCSE partner organisations identify people not known to services to offer accessible information, timely needs assessments, and accessible mental health support.

I am writing to you to ask for your support for these recommendations and their implementation. In addition to help in raising the needs of people with learning disabilities in all debates and policy development now and in the future. As discussions about the long-term restructuring and funding of social care get underway, this is vitally important.

Knowing the disproportionate impact Covid-19 is having on the lives and deaths of people with learning disabilities, the implementation of these recommendations and action to include and support people with learning disabilities cannot wait.

I look forward to hearing back from you

Yours sincerely,

[Your name]