



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

February 2019

*Dear Constituent,*

Thank you for contacting me about changing the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

I share your concern about this hugely important issue and I agree that the protection of children and young people must remain a priority. I want to pay tribute to those who have spoken out about child sex abuse.

As I am sure you are aware, sexual activity with a child under the age of 16 is a serious criminal offence, regardless of whether consent is given. It is also the case that any non-consensual sexual activity is a crime. It doesn't matter the age of the victim or the relationship between the victim and perpetrator. I understand it is also the case that where a manipulative offender grooms a child under the age of consent and then engages in a sexual relationship with them when they are over 16, offences are in place to deal with this such as Section 15A of the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

I do welcome the fact that the Sexual Offences Act 2003 also provides increased protection for younger people aged 16 and 17. Offences criminalise those in a position of trust who sexual abuse young people in their care. The offences target relationships where the young person has some dependency on the adult involved and often combined with an element of vulnerability of that young person. Ministers across Government are keeping this sensitive and important area of the law under review and working together to ensure that all young people, including our young athletes, feel safe in their training environment.

I hope this reassures you that the Government is committed to doing all it can to protect children and young people.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris".

**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP**  
**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**