



**Chris Heaton-Harris**  
Member of Parliament for Daventry  
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA  
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Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on people suffering with arthritis. I commend Versus Arthritis for their work to support people suffering with arthritis and to raise awareness of the condition.

I am so grateful to everyone who has worked so hard to stay at home throughout the pandemic. Your efforts have undoubtedly saved lives and enabled our NHS to provide urgent treatment like cancer and emergency care. However, I understand that 4.7 million people in England are now waiting for care, with around 380,000 of those having been waiting more than a year, in addition to people who have not contacted their GP when, in ordinary times they would have reached out for help. I agree that we must act urgently to tackle this problem.

The Government is already working with the NHS to accelerate service recovery. In March 2021, an additional £7 billion of funding was announced for healthcare services, including £1 billion to target backlogs in elective services. As part of the commitment to recovery of non-urgent services and to address elective backlogs, £325 million has been provided for new investment in diagnostics equipment to improve clinical outcomes.

I know that staff throughout the NHS are working extremely hard to tackle the backlog. In January and February 2021, NHS staff completed almost 2 million operations and other elective care while also providing treatment to 140,000 COVID-19 patients in England. However, I agree that there is more work to be done in this area over the coming months and I am keen to work with local healthcare organisations to encourage people to seek the care that they need, and to ensure that patients experiencing delays in treatment, including people waiting for joint replacements, have all the support that they need in the meantime.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

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

Website: [www.heatonharris.com](http://www.heatonharris.com)