



October 2021

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about endometriosis and polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS).

These are common long-term conditions that can have a significant impact on a woman's life, and I am aware of and sympathise with the hardships faced by women who experience severe symptoms. I believe it is important to raise awareness of the impact on women worldwide. All obstetricians and gynaecologists have been trained in the diagnosis and treatment of these conditions; it is a core part of their training.

To assist doctors, the NHS has published clinical guidelines on the management of endometriosis and PCOS. While there is currently no cure, there are several options for treatment and ways that individuals can alter their lifestyle to improve symptoms. NHS England has also developed units for severe endometriosis, with the expectation that all units provide women with severe endometriosis with care which meets the needs of each individual woman. I believe it is essential that care of this kind is specialised to a woman's unique needs, and I know that Ministers want to empower people to shape and manage their own health and care and make meaningful choices.

The Government launched a consultation to help inform the priorities, content and actions of England's first Women's Health Strategy, with questions on gynaecological conditions such as endometriosis. Analysis of the evidence gathered is underway, with a view to publishing the strategy later this year. This is a most welcome development and I look forward to learning more about these plans.

A swift diagnosis is vital to ensuring women can access the treatment and support that they need as quickly as possible. However, I understand that there are currently no plans to reduce the diagnosis time for endometriosis. Given the highly invasive nature of the diagnostic procedure and the varying degree to which women experience symptoms, it can be more appropriate to treat mild symptoms on clinical grounds and reserve a laparoscopy with its inherent risks for women with more significant symptoms. While I know that this will not be what you were hoping for, I would certainly be happy to work to raise awareness of the condition and its symptoms to ensure women are empowered to seek help when they experience endometriosis.

I welcome the work of Endometriosis UK and Verity, the UK PCOS Charity, to raise awareness of these conditions, as well as providing sufferers with further information and access to clinical trials and the latest research. Medical Research is funded through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).

In the last five financial years, the NIHR and UKRI have awarded £8.52 million for research into endometriosis and £6.60 million for research into PCOS. This includes a wide range of projects, from basic science through to applied health research into diagnosis, treatment and service



Chris Heaton-Harris
Member of Parliament for Daventry
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
Tel: 020 7219 7048

delivery. It is important that women with these conditions play a vital role in this research, and I am glad to learn that this is already the case.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY