



November 2021

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about Dr Liam Fox's Down Syndrome Bill.

I know that with appropriate help and support, most people with Down's syndrome are able to lead healthy, active and more independent lives, achieving more than ever before. I do recognise, however, that people with Down's syndrome face significant challenges across all stages of life and it is right that the Government considers how to help make sure their specific needs are recognised and considered. That is why I fully support Dr Liam Fox's Down Syndrome Private Members' Bill, and I am pleased the Government does too.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the need to improve access to services for people with Down's syndrome. The Down Syndrome Bill will require the Secretary of State to publish guidance to public bodies to ensure they are clear on how they should meet the needs of people with Down's syndrome. It will set out best practice across health, education social care and housing, giving practical advice on how the appropriate steps can be taken to meet the needs of those with Down's syndrome when planning, designing and delivering services.

It is especially welcome that the Government will consult widely on the proposed guidance, ensuring the voices of those with Down syndrome, their families and carers are heard, and that the guidance is fit for purpose. This, I believe, is essential.

The guidance is part of wider work that is ongoing to improve outcomes for all people with a learning disability. For example, you may be interested to know that the Government is trialling the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training programme to improve awareness and understanding of learning disabilities, including Down's syndrome, for all health and social care staff. I look forward to seeing the results of this trial. Additionally, the cross-government SEND Review, launched in September 2019, is considering ways improve outcomes for children and young people.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the work of my colleague Dr Liam Fox in bringing forward this important Bill. I look forward to seeing its passage through Parliament and can assure you that the Bill has my full support.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY