



The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP  
The Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London  
SW1A 2AA

29<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

### **Calling for: A Disability Inclusive Covid-19 Response**

*We write as a group of cross-party MPs and Peers in conjunction with the All-Party Parliamentary Disability Group, regarding the urgent importance of recognising, re-evaluating and resourcing the mainstream Covid-19 strategy to support disabled people during this critical time and thereafter.*

People with disabilities are disproportionately at higher risk from COVID-19 and its long term social and economic consequences, yet existing emergency responses to COVID-19 fail to prioritise them.

There are a number of key areas where the rights of disabled people are at risk, including the right to healthcare, the right to social care support and the right to information.

We are therefore calling for a **disability-inclusive COVID-19 response**.

The inequalities that people with disabilities face in everyday life have been exacerbated during this crisis, while the rights and protections created to support them are being weakened.

The Coronavirus Act relaxes the standards and obligations for essential services provided to persons with disabilities under the Care Act 2014. This de-facto suspension comes at a time when a third of people with disabilities have reported spending more time alone compared with a fifth of non-disabled adults (ONS).

As this crisis continues, we believe there are several steps to be taken to ensure the COVID-19 Response Strategy is disability-inclusive: -

- First, the Government must *recognise* the needs of those with complex disabilities and ensure **accessible communications** (e.g. ministerial statements etc.) are all accessible and available in a range of formats. (i.e. utilising sign language interpreters).
- Secondly, the Government must *re-evaluate* its current strategy to ensure social distancing does not lead to exclusion for those with disabilities who rely on assistance accessing groceries, medication and other personal care needs. According to a recent Office of National Statistics (ONS) survey, nearly 9 in 10 disabled adults have expressed concerns about the effect the pandemic is having on their lives and level of isolation. Protective measures should be put in place. Government guidance must be issued to ensure care workers and family members are enabled to safely and affordably support daily living, health and wellbeing and exercise needs.

- Thirdly, given amendments to the Care Act 2014, Local Government must provide clear, accessible guidance on social care and support services that are available to those living with disabilities, including information on the **process by which they can challenge any decisions to withdraw or reduce services.**
- Fourthly, the Government must be prepared to *resource* a disability-inclusive response. During this crisis, additional funding, training, resources and PPE are vital so that people with complex disabilities and their families receive the care they need. It is crucial to fully resource healthcare staff with PPE and training for staff working with patients with disabilities.
- Fifthly, it is necessary to accelerate efforts to **include people with disabilities in the Government's economic recovery plan.** We cannot allow the disability-employment gap or the treatment of disabled people in the workplace to worsen as a result of this pandemic, and the Government must address this issue by undertaking an impact assessment of the recovery plan based upon equalities principles.

It is vital this community is not forgotten. What we do now to support, include and enable people with disabilities across the UK, will have significant socio-economic and equality implications for years to come.

We look forward to your urgent response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lisa Cameron". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a thin blue horizontal line.

**Dr Lisa Cameron MP**  
Chair of the Disability All-Party Parliamentary Group

|                                    |                     |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Lord Sterling of Plaistow          | Conservative        |
| Baroness Cox of Queensbury         | Crossbench          |
| Angus MacNeil MP                   | SNP                 |
| Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle   | Green Party         |
| Baroness Bonham-Carter of Yarnbury | Liberal Democrat    |
| Baroness Brinton                   | Liberal Democrat    |
| Baroness Brown of Cambridge        | Crossbench          |
| Baroness Browning                  | Conservative        |
| Baroness Bull                      | Crossbench          |
| Baroness Burt of Solihull          | Liberal Democrat    |
| Baroness Campbell of Surbiton      | Crossbench          |
| Baroness Grey-Thompson             | Crossbench          |
| Baroness Healy of Primrose Hill    | Labour              |
| Baroness Jolly                     | Liberal Democrat    |
| Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb      | Green Party         |
| Baroness Lawrence of Clarendon     | Labour              |
| Baroness Lister of Burtersett      | Labour              |
| Baroness Masham of Ilton           | Crossbench          |
| Baroness Massey of Darwen          | Crossbench          |
| Baroness Prashar                   | Crossbench          |
| Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick    | Non-affiliated      |
| Baroness Thomas of Winchester      | Liberal Democrat    |
| Baroness Uddin                     | Non-affiliated      |
| Baroness Walmsley                  | Liberal Democrat    |
| Baroness Warwick of Undercliffe    | Labour              |
| Barry Sheerman MP                  | Labour Co-operative |
| Ben Lake MP                        | Plaid Cymru         |
| Lord Bishop of Coventry            |                     |
| Lord Bishop of Carlisle            |                     |
| Carla Lockhart MP                  | DUP                 |
| Caroline Lucas MP                  | Green Party         |
| Chris Hazzard, MP                  | Sinn Féin           |
| Claudia Webbe MP                   | Labour              |
| Debbie Abrahams MP                 | Labour              |
| Feryal Clark MP                    | Labour              |
| Francie Mollow, MP                 | Sinn Féin           |
| Gavin Robinson MP                  | DUP                 |
| George Howarth MP                  | Labour              |
| Ian Paisley Jr MP                  | DUP                 |
| Jamie Stone MP                     | Liberal Democrat    |
| Jim Shannon MP                     | DUP                 |
| John Finucane MP                   | Sinn Féin           |

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|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Julie Elliot MP            | Labour              |
| Kim Johnson MP             | Labour              |
| Lord Addington             | Liberal Democrat    |
| Lord Alton of Liverpool    | Crossbench          |
| Lord Balfe                 | Conservative        |
| Lord Blunkett              | Labour              |
| Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe | Labour              |
| Lord Browne of Ladyton     | Labour              |
| Lord Chidgey               | Liberal Democrat    |
| Lord Dholakia              | Liberal Democrat    |
| Lord Dubs                  | Labour              |
| Lord Dykes of Harrow Weald | Liberal Democrat    |
| Lord Foulkes of Cumnock    | Labour              |
| Lord Hendy                 | Labour              |
| Lord Hunt of Kings Heath   | Labour              |
| Lord Judd                  | Labour              |
| Lord Lansley               | Conservative        |
| Lord Loomba                | Crossbench          |
| Lord Mackay of Clashfern   | Conservative        |
| Lord Maxton                | Labour              |
| Lord McKenzie of Luton     | Labour              |
| Lord Oates                 | Liberal Democrat    |
| Lord Rennard               | Liberal Democrat    |
| Lord Rooker                | Labour              |
| Lord Russell of Liverpool  | Crossbench          |
| Lord Shinkwin              | Conservative        |
| Lord Taylor of Warwick     | Non-affiliated      |
| Lord Thurlow               | Crossbench          |
| Lord Tope                  | Liberal Democrat    |
| Lord Wood of Anfield       | Labour              |
| Mark Hendrick MP           | Labour Co-operative |
| Michelle Gildernew MP      | Sinn Féin           |
| Mickey Brady MP            | Sinn Féin           |
| Mike Penning MP            | Conservative        |
| Mohammed Yasin MP          | Labour              |
| Neale Hanvey MP            | Independent         |
| Órfhlaith Begley MP        | Sinn Féin           |
| Paul Girvan MP             | DUP                 |
| Paul Maskey MP             | Sinn Féin           |
| Paul Maynard MP            | Conservative        |
| Rosie Cooper MP            | Labour              |
| Sally-Ann Hart MP          | Conservative        |
| Sammy Wilson MP            | DUP                 |

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|--------------------------|------------------|
| Sarah Champion MP        | Labour           |
| Sir Jeffrey Donaldson MP | DUP              |
| Stephen Farry MP         | Alliance         |
| Tahir Ali MP             | Labour           |
| Vicky Foxcroft MP        | Labour           |
| Virendra Sharma MP       | Labour           |
| Zarah Sultana MP         | Labour           |
| Daisy Cooper MP          | Liberal Democrat |
| Lord Singh of Wimbledon  | Crossbench       |
| Apsana Begum MP          | Labour           |
| Lord Bruce of Bennachie  | Liberal Democrat |