



Department
of Health &
Social Care



From Caroline Dinenage MP
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House of Commons
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Dear Colleague,

This year will mark ten years since the Autism Act received royal assent on 12 November 2009. It places a duty on the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to publish a strategy to meet the needs of autistic adults in England, and to review this periodically. The current strategy *'Think Autism'* was published in April 2014.

We are asking for your support in promoting a national call for evidence on autism, which is being led jointly by the Department of Health and Social Care and the Department for Education. The call for evidence was launched on 14 March and invites views from autistic children and adults, families, carers and professionals on how we can improve services and support for autistic people. The call for evidence is part of the cross-government review of *'Think Autism'*, which will be refreshed and launched later this year. The strategy will be extended to cover children as well as adults, so services work better for autistic people of all ages.

We want to know what is working and importantly where more needs to be done to improve the lives of autistic people, including what the key priorities should be for the future. The call for evidence is open for responses until **16 May 2019**. It can be accessed online at the link below:

<https://consultations.dh.gov.uk/autism/2e4ae18d>

We know that not everyone will be comfortable with providing views via an online survey. Therefore, there are also word versions of the surveys, which can be completed and sent via post. The surveys can be accessed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/review-of-the-national-autism-strategy-think-autism-call-for-evidence>

The surveys are one part of our work to gather evidence and alongside this we are working with a range of organisations and networks to gather views, including face-to-face meetings with autistic people.

We would be grateful if you would consider supporting this cause via your networks and social media. We want to hear from as many people as possible so that we can work harder than ever to improve care and support for autistic people, their families and their carers.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to let you know that alongside the All Party Parliamentary Group on Autism, the National Autistic Society is running two Understanding Autism Sessions in Parliament on Wednesday 1 May. The aim of these sessions is to provide all MPs with the opportunity to learn more about how to best support autistic constituents and their families. Many colleagues will have first-hand experience, which we know informs the important work that they do. We would like to encourage you to attend if you can.

The details for the sessions are:

- Date: Wednesday 1 May
- Time: 13:00-14:00pm or 15:00-16:00pm

These sessions will be delivered by autistic adults and members of the National Autistic Society. Please email appga@nas.org.uk if you would like to attend or find out more information.

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is 'Caroline Dinénage' and the signature on the right is 'N. Zahawi'. Both are written in a cursive, flowing style.

CAROLINE DINENAGE AND NADHIM ZAHAWI