

Antony Higginbotham MP
Member of Parliament for Burnley



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

19 February 2021

Dear Constituent,

Re: Motor neurone disease

Thank you for contacting me about support for people with motor neurone disease (MND). I'm aware that MND can have a devastating impact on a person's quality of everyday life and be a real struggle for patients and their loved ones. So please allow me to assure you that ensuring early diagnosis and support for those living with MND remains a key priority of the NHS.

Early diagnosis is key to treating the symptoms of MND, I am glad that the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has published new guidelines for clinicians on the assessment and management of the disease. These set out the signs and symptoms and recommend that patients suspected of having MND should be referred without delay. The Royal College of GPs and the MND Association have also worked together to produce a 'Red Flag Tool' which sets out key signs of MND to help GPs to identify suspected cases and ensure prompt referral.

I also recognise the valuable contribution made by carers of people with MND, many of whom spend a significant proportion of their life providing support to family members, friends and neighbours. It's important that carers must receive the right support to help them carry out their caring roles and a new cross-Government National Carers Strategy is being introduced to look at what more can be done to support existing and future carers.

Thank you for inviting me to the February 2020 Meeting of the APPG for MND. Whilst I am unfortunately unable to attend, I am aware of that the University of Edinburgh has carried out some interesting research which identified an issue with MND patients' nerve cells; suggesting that this damage could be repaired by improving the energy levels in mitochondria. While I understand this research is still in early stages, it is a very welcome step forward, and I will certainly be following its developments closely.

Again, I appreciate you taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

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

Antony Higginbotham MP
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