Robin Walker MP
Member of Parliament for Worcester
House of Commons
London
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[redacted]

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Dear Ms Pigott

Thank you for contacting me about ME/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. Many constituents wrote to me and also contacted me on Twitter about this issue, and I have taken up their concerns as requested.

This has been a cross-party issue, and I have had numerous conversations across the House with colleagues regarding this extremely debilitating condition. The Westminster Hall debate was led by Carol Monaghan MP (SNP) but my colleague Nicky Morgan MP has undertaken a considerable amount of work in this area. The recent ME Awareness week has helped more people understand this condition, which can be so frustrating and distressing for many. As a Government Minister I was unable to speak in the debate. However, having taken up your concerns with the Department of Health and Social Care I have been informed that whilst there is currently no cure for ME/CFS, I am aware there are treatments that may help to ease symptoms, although no one form of treatment may suit every patient. The Health Secretary has said that patients should be involved in decision-making throughout every stage of their care. Furthermore, patients should be offered information about local and national self-help groups and support groups for people with ME/CFS and their carers. In addition, guidelines on how the illness should be treated in England are currently being updated. This process will require thorough and careful consideration, and I understand that NICE expect to publish new guidelines on ME/CFS in 2020. I have been assured by my ministerial colleagues that these new guidelines will take into account patients' concerns about the PACE trials and the effectiveness of some existing recommendations.

I believe that research into this area is vital. The Medical Research Council (MRC) and the National Institute for Health Research welcome high quality applications for research into all aspects of ME/CFS. ME/CFS research is a current MRC priority area and so far over £2 million has been invested into this research area.

The majority of services for people with ME/CFS are the responsibility of local clinical commissioning groups.

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To assist diagnosis, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) produced clinical guidance on the diagnosis, treatment care and support of children and adults with ME/CFS.

I will of course continue to follow any developments closely and please do contact me again if I can provide any help or support to you.

Sending you my best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Robin Walker MP