

Dear x

### **Communication Support (Deafness) Private Member bill**

I wanted to let you know that the Communication Support (Deafness) Private Members Bill on is due to receive its Second Reading in Parliament on Friday 25th October.

Prior to the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading a drop in event for MPs is being held between **2pm and 3pm on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> of October in Room W3 Westminster Hall**. I would encourage you to attend if you are able.

1 in 6 of your constituents are affected by some form of hearing loss and I hope you will find time to support the principles of the bill, even if you are not able to attend the Second Reading. One way you could support the bill and the wider campaign is by writing to Mike Penning, the Minister for Disabled People to express your support.

The core aim of the bill is to set up a Council for Communication Support on Deafness, which would assess the needs of people within a broad spectrum of hearing loss. This includes deaf sign language users, deafened, deafblind and hard of hearing people who use different forms of communication.

The council's remit would focus on conducting research into the provision of deaf communication and language support across all sectors of society from the very young to the very old. It will also look at promoting the teaching and learning of British Sign Language (BSL) and provide support for deaf children in schools.

I believe the bill provides a fantastic opportunity to raise awareness of the everyday communication barriers deaf people experience accessing public services, as well as banks and utility companies. The bill also highlights the difficulties that some deaf people have in communicating with their families such as deaf children born to hearing parents and with hearing siblings. This also includes those who have acquired hearing loss and have limited support available.

I hope you will be able to offer your support for the bill on behalf of your deaf and hard of hearing constituents by contacting ministers directly, tabling questions, supporting EDMs and supporting calls for a debate - if the Bill falls before a Second Reading.

I would be happy to meet with you to discuss the bill, or any other aspects of the campaign for deaf communication and language support, in more detail if this would be helpful. I would also be grateful if you could confirm whether you are able to attend the event on 15<sup>th</sup> October.

Yours sincerely,

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