



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

January 2017

*Dear Constituent,*

Thank you for contacting me about higher education.

Everyone with the potential should have the ability to access higher education, irrespective of their background and family income. By ending student number controls, the Government is ensuring that a university place is now within the reach of more students, and we are seeing record application rates among students from disadvantaged backgrounds. This shows the Government's reforms are working, and students understand they do not have to meet the cost of tuition fees up front.

However, if we are to continue to succeed as a knowledge economy, we cannot stand still, nor take for granted our universities' enviable global reputation and position at the top of league tables. We must ensure that a university system which is now open to more people is also fulfilling its full potential for students, for employers and for the taxpayers who underwrite it.

The Government committed in its manifesto to ensure that universities deliver the best possible value for money to students. That is why a new Teaching Excellence Framework will be introduced to recognise universities offering the highest teaching quality and to provide students with more data to help them choose the course that is right for them. The Government is also committed to ensuring we are investing strategically in our research base, following Sir Paul Nurse's review. The Higher Education and Research Bill will deliver on these commitments.

The Higher Education and Research Bill does not raise tuition fees and there are no plans to change the existing mechanisms for setting fees through secondary regulations. As announced in Budget 2015 and the Productivity Plan, the Teaching Excellence Framework will enable institutions that demonstrate high-quality teaching to access an upper fee limit that rises with inflation. Student loan entitlement will automatically adjust to cover the additional sum. In real terms, the £9,000 annual fee cap for full-time students set in 2012 is now worth £8,546. The Government wants to ensure our world-class higher education sector remains financially sustainable and able to invest in the excellent teaching students expect. The provision to maintain the maximum tuition fee in line with inflation was established in law in 2004.



These plans will help ensure that everyone with the potential to succeed at university, irrespective of their background, can choose from a wide range of high-quality universities, access relevant information to make the right choices and benefit from excellent teaching that helps prepare them for the future.

Once again, many thanks for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP**  
**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**