



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

October 2017

*Dear Constituent,*

Thank you for contacting me about higher education.

I believe everyone with the potential to 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 high application rates among students from disadvantaged backgrounds. This shows the 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 Conservative Party 2015 manifesto committed to ensuring universities deliver the best possible value for money to students. That is why a new Teaching Excellence Framework has been 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. There is also a commitment to strategically invest in our research base, following Sir Paul Nurse's review. The Higher Education and Research Act 2017 will deliver on these commitments.

EU and international students make an important contribution to our world-class universities, and our European neighbours are among some of our closest research partners. There are obviously discussions to be had with our European partners and these will be included in the negotiations.

International students are included in net migration statistics that are produced by the independent Office for National Statistics. In line with the internationally agreed UN definition, these statistics define a migrant as someone changing their normal place of residence for more than a year.



Students are therefore included in the same way as other migrants. Other countries, such as the United States, Canada, and Australia also include students in their net migration figures. Like other migrants, students who stay for longer than 12 months have an impact on communities, infrastructure and services while they are here, so it is right that they are included in the net migration count.

I welcome that the Act encourages more innovative higher education provision that will cater to the aspirations of a new generation of learners of all ages and backgrounds. This will ensure we deliver the skills necessary to keep our economy globally competitive. Students are demanding new ways of learning. That is why Dyson has received twenty times more applications than available places at their newly announced Institute of Technology. We cannot be complacent about our higher education system and we must ensure that our universities are delivering for the students and families that invest so much in them.

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,

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

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