



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

October 2019

*Dear Constituent,*

Thank you for contacting me about new mothers' mental health.

It is vitally important that women have access to the right care during pregnancy and in the first postnatal year. I have ensured that Ministers are aware of the National Childbirth Trust's 'Hidden Half' campaign on this important issue.

Improving perinatal mental health services during pregnancy and in the first postnatal year should be prioritised. Sadly, around one in four women experience mental health problems in pregnancy and during the 24 months after giving birth.

The NHS Long Term Plan seeks to improve access to and the quality of perinatal mental healthcare for mothers, their partners and children. This will be achieved through providing care through specialist perinatal mental health services from preconception to 24 months after birth, expanding access to psychological therapies and offering fathers/partners of women accessing specialist perinatal mental health services assessment for their mental health and signposting to support.

Investment by NHS England in multidisciplinary perinatal mental health clinical networks, which include GPs, will also help drive change. I hope that by working together through these networks, health practitioners can ensure women at risk of perinatal mental health problems are identified at an earlier stage and can receive better, more coordinated care.

Better access to mental health services is a big priority for the NHS which I am glad about as a firm supporter of the commitment to parity of esteem between mental and physical health.

Thank you again 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**

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