



**Chris Heaton-Harris**

Member of Parliament for Daventry  
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA  
Tel: 020 7219 7048

May 2022

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about the sexual harassment of women and girls in public. I agree that sexual harassment of women and girls, including in public places, is totally unacceptable. No one should be forced to change the way they live to avoid harassment and abuse.

I am glad that action is already being taken in this vitally important area. The Law Commission has recently concluded a wide-ranging review into hate crime. In its final report, the Commission made a number of recommendations to provide greater protection on the basis of sex and gender, including extending the offence of stirring up hatred to cover stirring up hatred on the grounds of sex or gender. It is suggested this would help to tackle the growing threat of extremist misogynist “incel” ideology, and its potential to lead to serious criminal offending. The Government will now carefully review and consider the recommendations of the report before issuing a full response and any future action.

I am, however, encouraged that the ministers have already taken action to implement some of the Law Commission’s findings. As you may recall, the Law Commission recommended that the Government launch a review into the need for a specific offence to tackle public sexual harassment, arguing that it would likely be more effective than adding sex or gender to the protected characteristics for aggravated offences and enhanced sentencing. Ministers have now announced that a consultation will be launched ahead of the summer recess on whether there should be a new offence of public sexual harassment. I am confident that this is the right approach to take to allow all those with an interest to submit their views on the arguments for and against any such measure.

I also welcome the publication of the tackling violence against women and girls strategy to ensure women and girls are safe everywhere - at home, online and on the streets. The strategy increases support for victims and survivors, will increase the number of perpetrators brought to justice and reduce the prevalence of violence against women and girls in the long-term. In addition, the Voyeurism (Offences) Act criminalises the reprehensible behaviour of up-skirting. There can now be no doubt that this activity is criminal and will not be tolerated. For the most serious offences, this law will ensure that the offender is also placed on the sex offenders’ register.



**Chris Heaton-Harris**

Member of Parliament for Daventry  
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA  
Tel: 020 7219 7048

You will be pleased to learn that relationships education is now compulsory for all primary pupils and relationships and sex education compulsory for all secondary school pupils. This ensures that concepts such as healthy relationships, consent and boundaries are taught to children.

There is more to do, and I will be paying close attention to the important work which is underway.

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**