



Department of Health & Social Care

*From Ashley Dalton MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State
for Public Health and Prevention*

*39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU*

PO-1607928

Manuela Perteghella MP

By email to: manuela.perteghella.mp@parliament.uk

9 June 2025

Dear Manuela,

Thank you for your correspondence of 10 May on behalf of a number of your constituents about Parkinson's disease.

I appreciate your constituents' concerns, and I am grateful to Movers and Shakers for their 'Parky Charter', which is supported by charities and us raising awareness of the needs of people with Parkinson's.

As your constituents may be aware, a significant proportion of the population are affected by neurological conditions, with one in six people suffering from conditions that can severely impact every aspect of their lives. I want to assure you that the Government is committed to providing high-quality care and support to people with conditions such as Parkinson's disease. This includes ensuring that they have access to the latest services and treatments, and that their families and carers are well supported at all stages of their lives.

We acknowledge the challenges that neurology services have faced, particularly regarding workforce, delays to treatment and care, and a lack of information and support for patients. In England, there are several initiatives to support service improvement and better care for patients with neurological conditions. These include the Getting It Right First Time (GIRFT) Programme for Neurology and the Neurology Transformation Programme (NTP). The GIRFT National Specialty Report made recommendations to improve services and to support the NHS to deliver care more equitably across the country.

The NTP has developed a model of integrated care for neurology services to support integrated care boards (ICBs) to deliver the right service at the right time, including providing care closer to home. A toolkit is being developed to support ICBs to implement this new model.

NHS England commissions the specialised elements of Parkinson's care that patients may receive from 27 specialised neurology centres across England. Within specialised centres, multidisciplinary teams ensure patients can access a range of health professionals and specialised treatment, according to their needs. NHS England is updating its Specialised Neurology service specification, which includes Parkinson's disease. Service specifications define the standards of care expected from organisations funded by NHS England to provide specialised care.

This summer, we will publish a refreshed Long Term Workforce Plan to deliver the transformed health service in England that we will build over the next decade and treat

patients, including those with Parkinson's, on time again. We will ensure the NHS has the right people, in the right places, with the right skills to deliver the care patients need when they need it.

The NHS Constitution sets out that patients should start consultant-led treatment within a maximum of 18 weeks from referral for non-urgent conditions. On 6 January, NHS England published the new Elective Reform Plan, which sets out a whole system approach to hitting the 18-week referral to treatment target by the end of this Parliament. We have already achieved our pledge to deliver an additional two million elective appointments, seven months ahead of schedule, as a first step to delivering on our commitment that 92 per cent of patients will wait no longer than 18 weeks from referral to consultant-led treatment – in line with the NHS constitutional standard – by March 2029.

The Government recently brought forward a Green Paper on the health and disability benefits system and the support we offer, entitled *Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working*. Within that, we consider how to improve the system for those with very severe health conditions and disabilities. As your constituents may be aware, Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is an important benefit to help contribute to the extra living costs of a disability or health condition. However, support needs to be more targeted to protect this safety net for future generations. We are taking action to focus PIP more on those with higher needs.

The changes to the PIP eligibility criteria will mean that people with a higher level of functional need – for example, people who are unable to complete activities at all, or who require more help from others to complete them – still receive PIP. For those who are affected by the new eligibility changes, we are consulting on how best to support this group, including how to make sure health and eligible care needs are met.

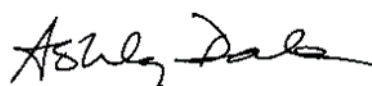
Eligibility for a Blue Badge is not condition-specific. Blue Badge eligibility criteria in England were extended in 2019 to include more people with non-visible disabilities, to ensure that people with the greatest needs, whatever their disability or condition, all have the same access to a badge.

Finally, with regard to research, between 2019-20 and 2023-24, £79.06million was spent on government-funded research into Parkinson's disease, through the UK Research and Innovation and the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). We are continuing to invest in Parkinson's disease research. For example, the UK Dementia Research Institute, primarily funded by Government, is partnering with Parkinson's UK to establish a new £10million research centre dedicated to better understanding the causes of Parkinson's and finding new treatments. The NIHR welcomes high-quality funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including Parkinson's.

We have also recently convened a new UK-wide neuro forum, which brings together the governments, health services and Neurological Alliances of all four UK nations. The new forum will share learnings across the UK, and raise important neurology services transformation and workforce challenges, as well as best practice examples and potential solutions.

I hope that this reply is helpful, and reassuring on the significant steps the Government is taking to improve the care provided to people with Parkinson's disease.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ashley Dalton', with a stylized flourish at the end.

ASHLEY DALTON