

HEIDI ALLEN MP
SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Stephen Hammond, MP
Minister of State for Health
By email to - MSHEALTH@dhsc.gov.uk

8th January 2019

Dear Stephen

I write as the chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Young Disabled People, together with Lauren West from Muscular Dystrophy UK. Lauren is responsible for MD UK's "Trailblazers", a network of nearly 800 young disabled campaigners and their supporters.

We would like to request a meeting to discuss an extremely important topic that is rarely spoken about.

Research shows that disabled women are missing out on vital health checks, such as cervical cancer screenings, because GP surgeries do not offer hoist transfers which are essential for disabled people who cannot transfer out of their wheelchair independently. This results in these conditions potentially going undiagnosed in the early and treatable stages.

The Department for Health has already taken great steps in recognising the importance of hoists by investing £2m into Changing Places toilets at hospitals, but we need to see more hoists across different areas of healthcare.

One of our key Trailblazers, Fiona Anderson, a disabled 30 year old mother of two, has started a petition for accessible cervical screenings. Fiona shared her powerful story of how she has been unable to have her cervical screening due to this lack of hoist facilities. In just a matter of weeks, the petition has received nearly 70,000 signatures. By Fiona having the courage to share her story, many more disabled women have come forward saying how they are in the same position and worry what this will mean for their health. In addition, parents of disabled children have expressed immense fear for their child missing out on vital screenings all because of the lack of hoists.

Access to medical care is a human right and disability should not be preventing a significant proportion of women from accessing vital treatments.

We would be grateful if Lauren and I, plus representatives from Trailblazers, could meet with you as soon as possible to discuss how we can address this issue.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Heidi Allen
MP for South Cambridgeshire

Lauren West
Trailblazer Manager



TRAILBLAZERS
Muscular
Dystrophy UK
Fighting muscle-wasting conditions