

From the Rt Hon Andy Burnham MP  
Secretary of State for Health



Your Ref: 01100578

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**02 MAR 2010**

*Dear Tessa,*

RECEIVED 03 MAR 2010

Thank you for your letter of 15 February enclosing an example of correspondence you have received from a number of your constituents about the Autism Strategy.

As you know, the Autism Bill received Royal Assent on 12 November 2009 to become the first ever piece of single impairment legislation.

The Autism Act 2009 commits the Government to publishing a strategy for adults with autism no later than 1 April 2010, and mandatory guidance for health and social care no later than 31 December 2010.

The Government's vision is that all adults with autism are able to live fulfilling and rewarding lives within a society that accepts and understands them, that they can access diagnosis and support as they need it, and that they can rely on mainstream public services to treat them fairly as individuals.

The Department of Health has been leading cross-Government work to develop the strategy. This work began in April 2008, and has been informed by a widespread public consultation from April to September 2009.

Phil Hope met Mark Lever, Chief Executive of the National Autistic Society and Chair of the Department's External Reference Group for Autism, on 1 February. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the progress of the autism strategy. Work is continuing on the development of the strategy and we will be publishing it shortly.

I hope this reply is helpful.

*Best wishes,*

ANDY BURNHAM