

Rt Hon Caroline Nokes MP
Chair, Women and Equalities
Committee
House of Commons

Wednesday 17 February 2021

Dear Chair,

Inquiry into Coronavirus, disability and access to services

I am writing following the publication of your Committee's inquiry report, 'Unequal impact? Coronavirus, disability and access to services', to address three of the Committee's recommendations.

First, we very much welcome the Committee's recommendation that the Government should consent to the Commission issuing a statutory Code of Practice on the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The Commission has also previously indicated its support for strengthening the PSED specific duties, in line with our proposals. We believe that these two steps - reform to strengthen the specific duties and a statutory Code of Practice – would drive much more strategic and impactful performance of the PSED. We have confirmed to the Government Equalities Office that we support your recommendation for a statutory Code and look forward to seeing its response.

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We also warmly welcomed the Committee's endorsement of our guidance on retailers' legal responsibility to disabled customers, and the recommendation for Government to promote the guidance. We continue to promote the guidance ourselves through existing channels and networks.

Finally, I wanted to share with you a briefing we have [published today](#), setting out our advice to Government on the principles and priority themes to guide the forthcoming National Disability Strategy. We note and share the Committee's concerns on the need for wide consultation with disabled people and their representative organisations. We have recommended full and formal public consultation, alongside targeted engagement with representative groups, in the development of the strategy. This should be accompanied by mechanisms to ensure the meaningful participation and active involvement of disabled people in the delivery of the strategy.

Yours sincerely,



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