Dear (INSERT NAME OF YOUR MP)

As one of your constituents I am asking you to oppose Schedule 11 of the Corona Virus Bill as it currently stands.

Schedule 11 proposes to remove existing legal duties of social care for disabled adults and their carers under the Care Act 2014 and to remove related duties for disabled young people in transition based on earlier legislation.

As the bill currently stands, schedule 11 can be used not only to prevent new assessments and care packages being put in place, but also removes duties in relation to packages of care that have already been agreed with individuals. For many disabled adults and children , this could mean removal of some of the support on which they are dependent, which could have a dramatic impact on their physical and mental health and put them at risk of neglect. It is imperative that the bill includes a guarantee that existing care packages will not be cut where to do so could threaten the health and well-being of disabled people. Under this bill, many will be unable to access the support and transition services that they need to stay well. It is imperative that the bill maintains requirements on local authorities to provide support where individuals' needs significantly increase.

In addition I am deeply concerned about proposals that will affect young people with Special Educational Needs as the bill proposes that the Secretary of State will have the power to disapply Section 43 of the Children and Families Act. This is the duty on schools and other institutions to admit a child where they are named on the young person’s Education Health and Care Plan.

Another concern are the proposed changes in Mental Health. The Coronavirus bill proposes allowing people to be detained on the authority of only one doctor rather than the two stated necessary in the Mental Health Act.

I do not doubt that radical measures are necessary at this time and appreciate the impact that lack of social workers could have on the ability of local authorities to meet their duties. However I am concerned that aspects of this bill could actually make this situation worse by driving disabled people into crisis. While some families may take on the care of disabled people, this will place significant strain on unpaid carers causing significant health issues. And for many disabled people, there is no one that can step in to support them. With no one else to turn to, the impact of disabled people in crisis will be felt primarily on frontline NHS services. Similarly, failures to agree care packages on hospital discharge will take up necessary beds in NHS services and again worsen the situation.

The government has stated that Local Authorities will be expected to do as much as they can to comply with their duties to meet needs, however there is nothing in the bill that formalises this expectation. I am deeply concerned that local authorities will not act in good faith unless it is clear that duties should only be ignored where there is no other option. I believe there are less damaging ways in which shortages of social workers can be addressed without massive infringement to the rights of disabled people that this bill proposes. These might include streamlined assessments, remote assessments and recruitment of new social workers

A group of barristers at Essex Chambers have suggested potential amendments to the bill:
[https://www.39essex.com/the-coronavirus-bill-schedule-11/?fbclid=IwAR1lpHIjzJuMkLbIjNtCE4I0doD39uYcXn1Om7yu89xfF-gjkPkoWPkN96o](https://www.39essex.com/the-coronavirus-bill-schedule-11/?fbclid=IwAR2KExewaQZVgFTdJZtZcPOjwuKRsWIQCscwCYzn9LWsQ-UfiZSrGRrPtsE)

I urge you to consider these and other measures to ensure that the radical steps taken to manage the impact of coronavirus are proportional and effective, while minimizing harm to disabled people carers and families

Yours sincerely

YOUR NAME