

ELLIOT COLBURN MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon. Rishi Sunak MP  
Chancellor of the Exchequer  
HM Treasury  
1 Horse Guards Road  
London  
SW1A 2HQ

25 September 2020

Our Ref: EC7221

Dear Rishi,

**RE: Manifesto Pledge on Dementia Research**

I hope that this letter finds you well.

I write on behalf of Alzheimer's Research UK and the many constituents who have contacted me since I was elected with their concerns about dementia and dementia care.

Like you, I was very proud to stand for election on the Conservative Party's Manifesto last December, and I particularly welcomed our commitment on dementia care:

*"We also want to save millions of people, and their families, from suffering the agony of a slow decline due to dementia.*

*"We will make finding a cure one of our Government's biggest collective priorities – one of the 'grand challenges' that will define our future along with the impact of climate change or artificial intelligence.*

*"This will include doubling research funding into dementia and speeding up trials for new treatments."*

I know that you, the Prime Minister, and other Cabinet colleagues remain committed to our 'Dementia Moonshot' to find a cure for this awful disease, and I was so pleased when the Prime Minister announced £1.6 billion in funding to tackle this.

However, I understand from Alzheimer's Research UK, and other organisations, that COVID-19 has had a devastating financial impact on medical research charities, with members of the Association of Medical Research Charities predicting a 41 per cent decrease in their medical research spend over the next year.

The impact of this financial uncertainty was reflected in a recent survey Alzheimer's Research UK conducted with their researchers, in which they found that 1 in 3 dementia scientists are considering leaving dementia research due to COVID-19.

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Tel: 020 7219 5862

E-mail: [info@elliottcolburn.co.uk](mailto:info@elliottcolburn.co.uk)

Additionally, the catastrophic impact of COVID-19 on people with dementia means that the need for additional investment has never been more urgent. A quarter of people who have died from COVID-19 also had dementia, and those with the condition are dying in greater numbers than in normal times with a 52 per cent increase in excess deaths since the beginning of the pandemic. Despite these shocking figures, the virus is threatening dementia research efforts.

If we are to stop pioneering researchers from leaving the field and ensure life-changing progress continues without delay, it is essential that the Government continues to prioritise dementia research and deliver on our election promise to double dementia research funding.

I have signed Alzheimer's Research UK's pledge to support protecting this doubling of research funding, and I should be very grateful if you could consider the points I have raised so that I may report back positively to my constituents and to the dementia charity sector.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elliot Colburn', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Elliot Colburn**

Conservative Member of Parliament for Carshalton and Wallington