



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA



DUNCAN BAKER MP  
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### **For Immediate Release**

Press Release from Duncan Baker MP  
Member of Parliament for North Norfolk

### **North Norfolk MP, Duncan Baker set to launch a major new Parliamentary Bill to see more support come forward for autistic children.**

The Member of Parliament for North Norfolk, Duncan Baker, will soon be presenting his new Private Members Bill named 'Autism (Early Identification) Bill'. The Bill will seek to make autism modules a mandatory part of initial teacher training, helping to identify and assess signs of the condition in children earlier.

As it stands, 39% of primary school teachers have just more than half a day's training in autism. For secondary school, this drops to just 14% as whilst SENCOs are placed in schools, it is often a postcode lottery as to whether a child receives the proper support.

73% of autistic children do not feel that teachers understand their needs which is not surprising considering that they are often labelled as disruptive or naughty when they simply don't have the structures in place to access education effectively. Without early intervention, an autistic child loses valuable time that would allow them to grow and develop. This negatively impacts the mental health of autistic children and young people.

Mr Baker wants to see these issues addressed as soon as possible.

The Government is keen to improve provision for SEND, bringing out the SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan last March, but this Bill will go further.

It aims to make sure that autism and SEND are mandatory modules during initial teacher training. We want to see more achieved in early teacher training to learn about early identification of autism, the special educational needs code of practice, and the pattern and sequence of child development.

The Autism (Early Identification) Bill is supported by many in the sector and will encourage the inclusion of autistic pupils in our education system. The Bill has been worked on in conjunction with FullSpektrum, Ambitious about Autism and Keystone Consulting.

### **Duncan Baker MP, Member of Parliament for North Norfolk said:**

*"By increasing awareness and understanding among teachers on the indicators of autism, they will be in a better position to support pupils and recommend them for an assessment earlier, meaning children will be in a better place to thrive not only in schools but in later life. Since I became an MP, my office has helped countless families get the support they need. I have listened, this is a cause that means so much to people right across North Norfolk, and one that I'm proud to be championing for my constituents in Parliament."*

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**Hayley Turner, a parent of an autistic child said:**

*"Our children spend up to 6 hours a day at school with their teachers. It is imperative that their teachers are trained in identifying the signs of autism so early intervention and pupil support can be provided in order for children to make progress and thrive."*

**Andre Skepple, Founder of FullSpektrum said:**

*"This bill is a landmark breakthrough for autistic children in the UK who've struggled to get the right education provision. It's a rallying call for change, offering crucial support. Early identification and intervention is the linchpin for their transformation, and I'm passionately backing this bill for the betterment of these children."*

**Fiona Cuthbertson, Managing Director of Keystone Consulting said:**

*"This Bill provides an amazing opportunity for autistic children that have struggled to get the education they deserve in the past. Early identification is the first step in the path to change for these children and this Bill will ensure this happens."*

**Jolanta Lasota, Ambitious about Autism Chief Executive**

*"School is too often a difficult and hostile place for autistic children and young people, and this can have a heavy impact on their mental health, their ability to learn and their prospects in future life. It is vital that their needs are identified early so that support can be put in place, and that all education staff have autism training so that autistic children and young people meet teachers who understand them and can support them to achieve."*

Yours sincerely,



**Duncan Baker MP**

Member of Parliament for North Norfolk