

PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GROUND-BREAKING DOWN SYNDROME BILL WILL BECOME LAW

A ground-breaking Bill, which is focussed on improving the lives of those living with Down syndrome in England, will become the 'Down Syndrome Act' following a successful Third Reading in the House of Lords today.

Dr Liam Fox MP, a former NHS Doctor and GP, introduced the 'Down Syndrome Bill', as his choice of Private Member's Bill after he successfully secured a Ballot Bill in the House of Commons this session.

It is rare for a Private Members Bill to become law. Dr Fox, an MP for some thirty years, secured both cross-party and Government support. As a result, the Down Syndrome Bill passed through both the House of Commons and the House of Lords without objection.

An open letter, in support of the Bill, urging members of the House of Lords to ensure that it completed its passage through the House, was published last week by the National Down Syndrome Policy Group (NDSPG) who are championing the Bill. More than a hundred Down syndrome organisations added their names to the letter in support.

Members of the NDSPG who attended the debate, including people with Down syndrome, were welcomed by the Lord speaker before the debate was concluded with a successful vote for the Bill.

Once Royal Assent is granted, there will be a public consultation undertaken to inform development of the necessary guidance around the Down Syndrome Act.

Dr Liam Fox MP, the Down Syndrome Bill Sponsor said:

"I am thrilled that my Private Members' Bill – the Down Syndrome Bill – is set to become an Act of Parliament. This will mean there is now a law to deal with the issues faced by those with Down syndrome. I hope that three things will flow from this. The first is to help to de-stigmatise Down syndrome. The second is to ensure that current provision of services is improved. The third is to look ahead and deal with future issues, such as long-term care, in an era where, for the first time, many of those with Down syndrome will outlive their parents."

Tommy Jessop, actor from BBC's Line of Duty crime drama and NDSPG Ambassador said:

"It's been a long journey for people with Down Syndrome and now it's time to make history. Well done everyone who worked for this. I feel we've done really good hard work on this."

Peter Brackett, Chair of the NDSPG said:

"It has been great to witness the Down Syndrome Bill's success in Parliament today sitting alongside our self-advocates from the NDSPG. The success of this Bill, which passed with no objection in Parliament, is testimony to Liam Fox's efforts, is such a positive for people with Down syndrome and their families. This is a welcome and long overdue opportunity for equal opportunity and levelling up for people with Down syndrome. "We have been delighted that so many Down syndrome organisations and others are backing the Bill, people united in their desire to see better opportunities, provision and outcomes for people with Down syndrome. We look forward to working with many of them when the public consultation gets underway, that's when the real work will begin. Today, we celebrate an historic moment in time."

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- For more information, see the National Down Syndrome Policy Group website www.ndspg.org or email contact@ndspg.org
- For media interviews with Dr Fox please contact David Goss david.goss@parliament.uk or call 07972 790445
- For interviews contact:
 - -Ken & Rachael Ross MBE on 07710 612 807 kenross@portsmouthdsa.org rachaelross@portsmouthdsa.org
 - -Lynn Murray on 07840 966736 or email lynn.murray@dspg.uk
 - -Peter Brackett on 07515 121733 peter.brackett@dspg.uk
- Successful Private Members' Bills since 1983 <https://commonsparliament.uk/research-briefings/sn04568/>

- People with Down syndrome who are trustees of the Down Syndrome Policy Group welcome the introduction of the Down Syndrome Bill: [Launch of The Down Syndrome Bill - YouTube](#)
- Line of Duty Star welcomes the launch of new APPG for Down syndrome <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/19295396.line-duty-star-tommy-jessop-backs-new-syndrome-all-party-parliamentary-group/>
- Liam Fox proposes bill to help people with Down's syndrome <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/liam-fox-proposes-bill-to-help-people-with-downs-syndrome-z56xbk3kb>
- 'It's time for us to live our lives to the full': Line of Duty's Tommy Jessop on changing the world for people with Down's syndrome <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/feb/02/its-time-for-us-to-live-our-lives-to-the-full-line-of-dutys-tommy-jessop-on-changing-the-world-for-people-with-downs-syndrome>
- NDSPG Open letter to the members of the House of Lords seeking their support for the Down Syndrome Bill <https://ndspg.org/media/>