

Dear(MP)

I am writing to you today as a concerned constituent who has chosen to remain at home/ would like to be at home to raise, nurture and support my family. Specifically, I would like to ask why so much emphasis and funding is placed on 'professionals' to intervene in solving our children's increasing mental and wellbeing problems, which many believe would be less acute if children were able to spend more time at home, being cared for by their loving mothers. Mothers are denied the chance to be there ourselves; penalized when we do so by an economic system which is stacked against us?

As we look to '*build back better*' following the pandemic, I feel strongly that this matter is of crucial importance in the future wellbeing of families and in particular of our young children. The Royal Foundation has partnered with the London School of Economics and has found that in England alone we are paying at least £16.13 billion each year in remedial costs to address issues — from children in care to short- and long-term mental and physical health issues — that might have been avoided through action in early childhood.

Through the Duchess of Cambridge's work on the Early Years and the work by Dame Andrea Leadsom MP on 1001 Critical Days (from conception to 2yrs). there is a growing awareness of how critical the first few years are for the emotional and mental wellbeing of our children. In particular, there is a recognition of the infant's need for early attachment to a primary caregiver and that this relationship buffers the infant from stress and sets the cornerstone for emotional stability and resilience in later years.

A child begins to feel separation anxiety when removed from their mother (or primary caregiver) at about six months and usually grows out of this at about three years. In contradiction to the science, the policy of all major political parties over the last decade or more has sought to encourage and incentivise mothers into the paid workforce often at the very time when her unique role in nurturing and giving the infant his or her sense of self is at its most critical. Given the rise in adverse mental health in increasingly younger children, who lack secure early foundations and therefore the resilience needed to cope with the increasing demands of contemporary life, surely this is short-sighted. A more supportive approach to stay at home parents, particularly at this time, would pay bigger dividends long-term.

I am a member of Mothers at Home Matter which lobbies the government to enable mothers to have the choice to be fully present for their children, particularly whilst they are so young. The pressures on returning to paid work are largely economic, but also social, as mothers feel more valued if they are in paid work than if they choose to take time away from the workforce to care for their families.

I would be grateful if you could read the enclosed/attached leaflet 'Mothers at Home Matter MAHMifesto', and would welcome an opportunity to speak to you about what the Conservative/Labour/Lib Dem party can do to remove some of these penalties and enable mothers to have more choice who cares for their children.

Yours sincerely,