



2019-00MDPO

Michelle Donelan MP

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families

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To: Carolyn Deveney, Head of Participation, Contact
Tina Emery and Mrunal Sisodia, co-chairs of the
National Network of Parent Carer Forums

4 November 2019

Dear Carolyn, Tina and Mrunal,

**CONTACT AND NATIONAL NETWORK OF PARENT CARER FORUMS
CONFERENCE: 7 NOVEMBER**

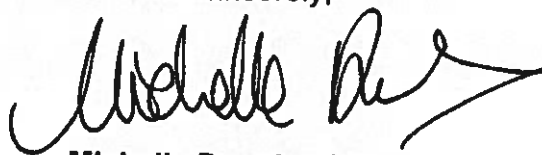
You will already have heard from Departmental officials that I am no longer able to speak at your conference on 7 November. I wanted to write and personally explain the position, and to apologise for having to pull out at such short notice and for the inevitable inconvenience and disruption that this will cause you.

I firmly believe that the system for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is improved if it is influenced strongly by the voice of parents, and children and young people with SEND. The work that parent carer forums up and down the country do to ensure that voice is heard, and to work in coproduction with local authorities and other organisations, is invaluable. Equally important is the work you do to provide leadership and direction, and to support, and input into, national policy. These are clearly having an important and positive impact and I am extremely grateful for all your hard work.

I am so disappointed not to be able to attend your conference, and to meet and talk to you and parents because it falls in the pre-Election period. As I am sure you know, during this time, I am unable to take on these kind of commitments. It is doubly disappointing that the meeting I had scheduled with Mrunal and Tina on 4 December cannot now go ahead either. I am pleased, however, that Departmental officials will be able to attend your conference.

My very best wishes for a successful conference, and for continued success to ensure coproduction becomes the way of working in every local area in England.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michelle Donelan', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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