

Press Release



Thursday 2nd April 2009, London, UK ... *World Autism Awareness Day*

Polly Tommey's "Dear Gordon Brown ..." Campaign – A Personal Response from the PM

Polly Tommey, a mother from London with a son with autism has resorted to extreme measures to get the attention of Gordon Brown on behalf of the thousands of mothers of children with autism in the UK. She has had her name and telephone number plastered across poster sites throughout the country in the hope that this will enable her to make contact with Gordon Brown and meet him face to face.



Made possible by a generous group of commercial supporters in outdoor media, this poster campaign has allowed Polly to make her personal appeal in a very public way, in the hope of meeting Mr Brown to discuss the future of her 12 year old son Billy and others in a similar situation. She has also written to and called Downing Street; she has spoken on numerous radio programmes; and has appeared on television news and chat shows.



Following a week and a half of intense bombardment of Downing Street through these many channels, the Prime Minister has now personally responded to Polly and her campaign making the following points:



- He has specifically acknowledged that people with autism today often do not get the support they need and deserve and he recognises that more needs to be done to provide this support.
- He has indicated that a future meeting with him can take place and has asked a government minister and two senior members of his advisory teams to meet with us in the meantime.
- He has indicated that a major consulting exercise will commence later this year and that many parallel initiatives are also now underway which will touch on autism across government.
- Finally, he has set out the existing initiatives that his government colleagues are involved in alongside a range of other organisations.

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Polly commented, *“Mr Brown has responded quickly and constructively and has impressed us with his recognition of the importance of autism and the devastating impact the condition can have on people with autism and their families.”*

“However more needs to be done and a real understanding of the scale of the challenge of autism remains to be grasped as does the vital importance of working with both existing and new organisations and charities in the sector. This is why I still need to meet with Mr Brown in person.”

Polly concluded, *“As The Autism Trust, we welcome the chance of working with Gordon Brown and his team and expect to be able to contribute significantly as we all move autism much more onto the political agenda in the UK.”*

Notes for Editors

The Autism Trust (registered charity Nr 1117657)

www.theautismtrust.org.uk

The Autism Trust’s focus is on building inspiring, sustainable and real futures for the many children with autism in the world today: ***A Safe Haven for People with Autism***

The objective of The Autism Trust is simple: to create a future with purpose for children everywhere with autism. We aim to do this by developing a worldwide network of innovative, high-quality environments: Centres of Excellence in Autism.

Polly Tommey

Polly Tommey is a mother dealing with autism. She is also the founder and Editor-in-Chief of The Autism File. Polly has been producing what is now the leading retail magazine on autism in the UK, USA & Canada (with a current issue circulation of over 40,000 copies) from her family’s house in Hampton, West London since 1999. Polly is also the Founder of The Autism Trust, a UK registered charity focused on building an inspiring and sustainable future for children with autism in the UK when they leave full time education.

Polly is regarded as one of the leading figures in autism in the UK as a campaigning and influential journalist and is featured regularly as a sector expert in the media. She is currently directing an investigative television documentary on autism to be broadcast in 2009. Polly also presents a regular radio programme: Autism Issues From Around the World on Autism One Radio; she is Secretary of the Autism Human Rights & Discrimination Initiative; and is a regular attendee and presenter at conferences worldwide. She is married to Jonathan Tommey who runs The Autism Clinic and they have three children, one of whom has autism.

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