



Prime Minister of the United Kingdom
Copy to: Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

By email:

17th July 2026

Dear Prime Minister,

Re: Request to allot Parliamentary time for Christopher's Law

On 8 July 2026, I brought the Mental Capacity (Duty to Assess) Bill to the House of Commons. I brought this Bill, also known as Christopher's Law, with cross-party support and in the presence of three bereaved mothers whose children could have been saved by its provisions: Fiona, Annabel and Jo.

The devastating misuse of the presumption of capacity under the Mental Capacity Act 2005 has resulted in hundreds of preventable deaths, with King's College London finding 160 of these in 2023 alone. This Bill is named in honour of Christopher Laskaris, whose story heartbreakingly illustrates the effect of misusing this presumption to excuse inaction.

Christopher was a young autistic man living alone in Leeds. Over 8 years, his mother, Fiona, raised credible doubts about his capacity to live independently without support, but was deemed an overprotective mother by the local authority. Horrifically, Christopher was exploited and murdered in his home by a man who had just been released from jail. He was 24.

Charlie had Prader-Willi Syndrome, a genetic condition which compelled him to overeat. After Annabel locked their food cupboards, Charlie bought food and visited food banks. His mum, Annabel, repeatedly begged authorities for help, and was ignored. Reaching 30 stone, Charlie ultimately ate himself to death. He was 35.

Terence Glover had paranoid schizophrenia that impaired his judgement, which was known to police. He repeatedly told them in 999 calls that he intended to run over and kill children. The police took no action, Glover drove a car into a crowd of school children, and Jo's son, Harley, was killed. He was 12.

Under this Bill, Christopher and Charlie would have been granted the mental capacity assessments that their mothers knew they needed. Under this Bill, the police would have been required to refer Glover for a mental capacity assessment. Under this Bill, Fiona, Annabel and Jo's children might still be with us.

This Bill has been drafted by one of the most prominent mental capacity lawyers in the country, Alex Ruck Keene, Honorary King's Counsel. It has two key clauses:

A Duty to assess capacity where a person is reasonably understood to have any impairment or disturbance in the functioning of their mind or brain, and

A Duty to assess capacity where a person properly interested in a person's circumstances, has raised a concern as to their capacity.



Chris Coghlan MP

Member of Parliament for Dorking and Horley
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

Although these safeguards are in the Code of Practice, they are too often ignored, so must be brought into law to mandate compliance. It will enhance the presumption by ensuring that it is not used against people to their cost or to the cost of others.

I have been working with Fiona for over two years to close this loophole. We have worked cross party and with the Government. ITV has mounted a national campaign to expose this injustice. I am grateful for all of this and the result that the Government has now committed to review and reform the Mental Capacity Act.

This Bill offers an opportunity to realise that commitment.

I therefore implore you to make room for this Bill on Government time. It passed First Reading without dissent, and for the hundreds of parents like Fiona, Annabel and Jo, it cannot be permitted to fall off the Parliamentary agenda.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Coghlan

Liberal Democrat MP for Dorking and Horley

Fiona Laskaris
Mother of Christopher

Jo Spencer-Wood
Mother of Harley

Annabel Marsh
Mother of Charlie