

CHRIS LODER MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

15th August 2020

Dear A-level students in West Dorset

May I first congratulate those of you who have successfully achieved your desired A-level results and are well on the way to pursuing your chosen path in the next academic or vocational year.

Over the last few days, I have been in dialogue with a good number of headteachers, parents and students regarding A-level results that were not as they had anticipated. I'm writing this open letter specifically to reach out to students across West Dorset who find themselves in this situation.

In my view, nothing can properly replace the actual sitting of exams and no algorithm will measure a student's abilities as accurately. One of the inescapable consequences of the pandemic these past five months, while our focus has been on keeping communities safe, has been the disruption to education and exams. Despite this disruption, thanks to your hard work, we have seen 28.6% of A-levels in the South West being graded A or A*, with an overall pass rate of 98.4% - both figures representing an increase on 2019.

However, I know there are students who have been negatively impacted by this process; particularly those of you whose predicted results were downgraded and whose university offers have been rejected as a result.

Yesterday, I was on a call with the Universities Minister; the day before, with the Education Minister. I was informed that universities would hold places open for those with grades that are subject to appeal. However, I recognise that this doesn't concur with some of the feedback I have received from you; in which you tell me that you have experienced a lack of flexibility from some universities.

The Government announced yesterday that it will cover the cost of appeals, to give every student the chance to rectify their grades where the system has not provided an accurate reflection of their ability. If you are in a position of needing help, beyond what your school or college is able to assist you with through the appeals process, please do the following:

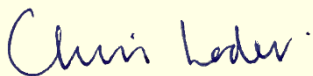
1. Check that I am your MP by visiting <https://members.parliament.uk/FindYourMP>. If you do not live in the West Dorset constituency, you will need to get in touch with your own local MP.
2. Please email me as succinctly as you can to hello@chrisloder.co.uk with the following details:
 - a. Your name, address, contact email and phone number, along with that of your parent or guardian where appropriate.
 - b. If you prefer a parent or guardian to contact me on your behalf, or you are not yet 18 years old, then I must also have your written permission for them to do so, along with any correspondence they send me.

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- c. Name of the school or sixth form college you attended.
- d. Your mock exam results (if taken), predicted results and actual results.
- e. Which subjects you are disputing and the reasons why.
- f. Tell me the university offers you have had, highlighting your first choice.
- g. Confirm whether you have been in touch with universities, whether your offers have been honoured or not and anything else that they have said to you.
- h. Confirm which subjects you are intending to appeal, if that is the case.

I was not fortunate enough myself to be in the position of going to university after sixth form, but I shall be very pleased to help those of you who have been disadvantaged by this grading process.

Yours faithfully



Chris Loder MP

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cc: All secondary headteachers in West Dorset