

PETER GIBSON MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

August 2021

Dear Constatment

Thank you for your email about the European Football Championship.

I was thrilled to be able to experience England's run to the final in Euro 2020, the first time we have reached the final of a major international competition since 1966. While we were unfortunately unable to top off a fantastic campaign with the trophy, I was delighted with the way the team's run brought the nation together after what has been an incredibly challenging last year.

I was also shocked and appalled to learn that a number of England's players were subject to racist abuse following the final. Let me be absolutely clear, racism is totally unacceptable in all of its forms and I welcome the zero tolerance approach taken by the footballing authorities and the police in dealing with it. To echo the words of the Prime Minister, the team deserves to be lauded as heroes and those responsible for the appalling abuse should be ashamed of themselves. Furthermore, I am encouraged that the MET Police has announced that the social media comments in question will be investigated.

Let me be completely clear, I and this Government absolutely respect and support the rights of all people to peacefully protest and make their feelings known about injustices. I would hope that people would take the opportunity to get behind the national team and cheer them on, rather than boo.

Finally, I welcome that the Government is bringing forward legislation to help tackle the issue of online abuse. The draft Online Safety Bill includes measures to protect children online and tackle some of the worst abuses on social media, including racist hate crimes. Ofcom, the UK's independent communications regulator, will be given the power to fine companies failing in a new duty of care up to £18 million or ten per cent of annual global turnover, whichever is higher, and have the power to block access to sites.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact me and if I can ever be any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

*Yours Sincerely
Peter Gibson*

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