

Speech: A source of 'inspiration and determination for us all' – PM at Parkinson's reception

I am delighted to welcome you all to Downing Street and to have this opportunity to thank you all for everything you are doing to support this brilliant charity and to lead the way in the fight against Parkinson's.

I think what we have just heard so movingly from Emma and from Steve this evening should be a source of both inspiration and determination for us all.

Inspiration, because we should all be inspired by all that Parkinson's UK has helped to achieve at the forefront as we've heard of pioneering research that has improved our understanding, care and treatment of Parkinson's.

We should be inspired by the immeasurable support that this charity – and so many people in this room – provide to those affected by Parkinson's, as well as to their loved ones and carers.

And I believe we should be inspired too by the achievements of those living with the condition.

People like Emma who, as we have seen tonight, are changing attitudes towards Parkinson's.

And people like the conductor James Morgan – who together with his partner Juliette – have raised more than £270,000 for Parkinson's UK by staging star-studded concerts at the Royal Albert Hall.

These concerts have enabled James to show just how much he can still achieve living with Parkinson's, while at the same time raising vital funds to help others.

And I was delighted earlier to be able to present James and Juliette with a Point of Light award – which recognises outstanding volunteers in our country for their service to others.

But as we draw inspiration from all of these things, so we should also renew our determination to step up the fight against Parkinson's.

For two centuries on from Dr James Parkinson's Essay on the Shaking Palsy, we have simply not done enough or come anywhere near far enough.

We still do not have the capability as Steve has just said to slow or stop the condition in its tracks.

And as Emma and Steve have said so powerfully, the time to act is now.

For our part, this government is investing over £1 billion a year through the

National Institute for Health Research – which has doubled its spending on neurological conditions since 2010.

Already Parkinson's UK and the UK research community have achieved a great deal together.

We have many of the world's top scientists and researchers – and while several great discoveries have been made across the world – it is in the UK that we are joining them up.

We have been steadily building towards a tipping point in Parkinson's research and we must do everything possible to bring that moment to pass.

So I would urge everyone across the country to do all they can to support this effort – and to support the vital work of charities like Parkinson's UK.

So that together we can reach that breakthrough moment and bring forward the day when no-one need fear Parkinson's again.

So on behalf of the whole country, thank you again for all that you are doing in the fight against Parkinson's; thank you for the leadership you are showing in changing attitudes towards Parkinson's, and thank you for all the support that you give to thousands of people across our country.