



Department
of Health &
Social Care

From Maria Caulfield MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for
Mental Health and Women's Health Strategy

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Ms Alison Cobb
Policy and Campaigns Advisor
Mind
By email to: a.cobb@mind.org.uk

22 November 2023

Dear Ms Cobb,

Thank you for your correspondence of 7 November to the Prime Minister on behalf of a range of organisations about the Mental Health Act. As this policy falls in its remit, your correspondence has been passed to the Department of Health and Social Care for reply.

I recognise that the absence of a Mental Health Bill from the King's Speech will have disappointed many people. I am incredibly grateful to the many experts and members of the public who generously gave their time to develop the draft Bill, and I assure you that it remains our intention to bring forward a Mental Health Bill when Parliamentary time allows us to do so. We are also grateful to the Joint Committee on the Draft Mental Health Bill for its recommendations, which we have considered, and we will publish a response in due course.

I can assure you that the Government will continue to deliver on its commitments to increase and improve the mental health support available for those who need it.

We continue with other work to improve the care and treatment of people detained under the Mental Health Act, including piloting models of culturally appropriate advocacy that provide tailored support to hundreds of people from ethnic minorities, allowing them to better understand their rights when they are detained under the Act.

NHS England has also recently launched the mandatory Patient and Carer Race Equality Framework for all NHS mental health trusts. This will support trusts and providers to work with communities, patients and carers to agree and implement actions to reduce racial inequalities in their services and to make decisions with communities, not for them.

Through the *NHS Long Term Plan*, we committed to expanding and transforming mental health care, supported by an additional £2.3 billion a year by 2024, so that two million more people can get the treatment they need. Our total investment in NHS mental health services in England rose to nearly £16 billion in 2022/23, and this will continue to increase through the Mental Health Investment Standard, which requires integrated care boards to increase investment in mental health services in line with their overall increase in funding.

We are also increasing the availability of NHS Talking Therapies for mental health problems like stress, anxiety and depression, with 1.22 million people accessing treatment in 2022/23, an increase of 130,000 on 2018/19. To support this, we are adding 27,000

staff to the mental health workforce by March 2024. As of June, there were the equivalent of 143,710 full-time workers, which is an increase of over 10,100 on June 2022.

We are continuing to roll out mental health support teams in schools and colleges so that more children and young people can get early support with their mental health. We achieved our original ambition of covering 25 per cent of pupils in England a year earlier than planned and we expect this to increase to 4.2 million pupils, 44 per cent of the pupil population, by March 2024. We plan to increase this further, extending coverage to 50 per cent by 2025. We have also announced plans for innovative community-based mental health and wellbeing support for young people through ten early support hubs in England, backed by £4.92million of new funding until the end of 2024/25.

As part of our plans to improve mental health facilities, we are investing over £400million to remove all dormitories and give patients the privacy of their own ensuite bedroom. So far, over 600 beds have already been replaced across 34 sites.

We are also investing £150million in new projects to support urgent and emergency mental health care, to reduce A&E attendances and help avoid inpatient admissions. This includes £7million for up to 100 mental health ambulances and £143million for over 160 alternatives such as crisis houses, safe havens and improved urgent care facilities; 50 have already been completed, and we expect 40 more to be completed before the end of this winter.

We have published an ambitious cross-government national suicide prevention strategy for England, committing to over 100 actions that we believe will reduce the suicide rate within two and a half years. £57million has been provided through the *NHS Long Term Plan* to embed local suicide prevention activity and suicide bereavement support services in every local authority area. Alongside this, we have provided over £15million of funding for voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector organisations that support suicide prevention since 2021/22. This includes the current £10million Suicide Prevention VCSE Grant Fund, which has received nearly 2,000 applications.

I hope this reply is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Maria'.

MARIA CAULFIELD MP