

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

15th November 2018

New Constituent,

RE: MENTAL HEALTH POLICY.

Thank you for contacting me recently about mental health policy; your comments upon which I read with great interest.

I agree with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care that while it is hugely welcome that we are on the road to parity of esteem, there is still more to do. I am extremely encouraged by the news that, as part of the five-year funding offer that will see the NHS budget grow by over £20.5 billion a year, mental health services will receive an additional £2 billion per year.

I am pleased that a new mental health crisis service with comprehensive mental health support will be available in every major A&E, alongside new children and young peoples' crisis teams across the country. The additional funding will also deliver more mental health ambulances, "safe havens" in the community; and a 24-hour mental health crisis hotline when people are in urgent need of help.

I hope that these new services help end the stigma surrounding mental health, offering crucial support to people suffering from crisis and those who have suffered in silence for too long. As you may also be aware, the Prime Minister recently announced the creation of a Minister for Suicide Prevention, who will help continue the progress made in suicide prevention, with suicide rates at their lowest for seven years.

The Government announced reform to mental health policy in last year's Queen's Speech, in order to continue to reduce the number of people detained in police cells under the *Mental Health Act*. A comprehensive review of the *Mental Health Act*, which has remained unchanged for more than three decades, will examine existing practices, and address the disproportionately high rates of detention of people from ethnic minorities. The review will be led by Professor Sir Simon Wessely, a former president of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, and he will consider the needs of all users of mental health services and their families, with the aim of improving the system's support for those during a mental health crisis.

Treating and caring for people in a safe, compassionate environment – for both patients and staff – is a top priority for the Government. The Government is committed to reducing the use of restraint in mental health settings and is fully supporting the *Mental Health Units (Use of Force) Bill* which seeks to reduce the use of force and restrictive practices in mental health units.

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Email: pursglovet@parliament.uk - Telephone: 0207 219 8043



I know the Government is working to ensure mental health spending is spread across the whole country. Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) are required to achieve the *Mental Health Investment Standard*, to demonstrate they have increased their mental health spending in line with the growth in their overall budgets. I am happy to note that in 2016/17, 85 percent of CCGs achieved this standard, and NHS England continues to work with CCGs to improve this figure.

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

With best wishes

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

I have particularly been involved in helping to get the 'Use of Force' Bill through Parliament, including serving on the Bill Committee.