



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

14th July 2023

Dear Anthony,

RE: MENTAL HEALTH

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your concerns about access to mental health support and services. I have read your comments with interest.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the mental health of people across our country, and I welcome action taken by the Government to improve relevant support and services.

Unfortunately, I was unable to attend Mind's parliamentary event on the 6th July 2023, owing to prior diary commitments. However, please rest assured that I take these issues very seriously, and wanted to take this opportunity to set out what the Government is doing in this area.

As part of the five-year funding offer agreed in 2019, mental health services will receive an additional £2.3 billion a year in real terms by 2023-24, enabling service expansion and faster access to community and crisis mental health services for all. The Government has committed to increase mental health spending to 8.9 percent of all NHS funding.

As announced in the 2021 Spending Review, a new investment of £150 million will be spent on NHS mental health facilities linked to A&E departments to enhance patient safety. Additionally, around £300 million will complete the programme of replacing mental health dormitories with single en-suite rooms.

Almost £1 billion of extra funding in community mental health care by 2023/24 will give 370,000 adults and older adults with severe mental illnesses, including eating disorders, greater control over their care and will support them in their communities. The Government aims to grow the mental health workforce by an additional 27,000 staff by 2023/24; indeed, the mental health workforce has increased by over 8,900 full-time equivalent staff in 2022, compared to 2021.

Last year, the Government pledged to expand mental health support in schools, particularly as half of related conditions take root by the age of 14. 'Our Plan for Patients' promised to boost the number of mental health practitioners in primary care and to strengthen mental health support in schools. It also commits to improve access to NHS talking therapies and to enhance community support for adults living with severe mental illnesses.

In December 2022, the Government announced £3.6 million of funding for the National Academy of Social Prescribing, an organisation which helps those experiencing grief, addiction, dementia and loneliness, through community-led social activities, services and opportunities, with proven benefits to wellbeing.




The Government is also set to publish a *Major Conditions Strategy*, and mental ill health is one of the six major conditions included. This ensures that it is considered alongside other physical health conditions, rather than as a standalone strategy. The Department of Health & Social Care has launched its call for evidence for the *Major Conditions Strategy*; the consultation is now closed, and the findings will be released in due course.

Preventing and providing better support for mental ill health will certainly be part of the strategy, as well as our separate standalone *Suicide Prevention Strategy*. The Government recognises that the risk factors to mental ill health are often cross-society in nature and therefore require a cross-departmental approach.

I hope these improved services end the stigma surrounding mental health, offering crucial support to those who have suffered in silence for too long.

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**