



Department  
of Health

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State

Jackie Doyle-Price MP  
for State of Mental Health and Inequalities

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Your Ref: MW/GR

PMPO-1121801

Mr Geoff Raw  
Chief Executive, Brighton and Hove City Council  
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27 MAR 2018

*Dear Mr Raw*

Thank you for your letter of 19 February to the Prime Minister about mental health services. As this is a health-related matter, your letter has been passed to the Department of Health and Social Care for reply.

I appreciate your concerns about the funding of mental health services. I would like to assure the Council that we continue to take mental health as seriously as physical health and hold the NHS to account for achieving the objectives set out in the last NHS Mandate, ensuring that mental and physical health conditions are given equal priority. We have legislated for parity of esteem between mental and physical health through the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

We were the first Government to set up waiting times for mental health and increased spending on mental health to £11.6 billion in 2016/17, with a further investment of £1 billion every year by 2020/21, so that we can ensure that clinically appropriate mental health services continue to be provided to those who need them.

The Government has invested over £120 million to introduce waiting time standards for mental health services. Over the last Spending Review, we also invested over £400 million in the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme to ensure access to talking therapies for those who need them, and this has contributed to achieving very real improvements in the lives of people with anxiety and depression.

We have also announced plans to recruit 21,000 new people to the mental health workforce, who will be able to treat an extra million patients each year.

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With regard to treating people locally, in line with the recommendations of the Independent Mental Health Taskforce published in February 2016, the Government set a national ambition in April 2016 to eliminate inappropriate out-of-area placements for adult acute inpatient care by 2020/21. We are also committed to ending inappropriate out-of-area placements for children by 2021.

For many people with mental health issues, especially anxiety or stress, seeing their GP or going to A&E will not be the right intervention. Alternative provision, whether it is places of safety, crisis cafes or community clinics that are often run by local charities, offer a less intimidating option for people. The Department of Health and Social Care is expanding the existing funding for alternative places to support a wider range of preventive services in the community, and ensure that charities, churches and community organisations can run them too. Throughout the country, initiatives such as street triage schemes (mental health nurses accompanying police) and crisis cafes are being put in place to address local needs and give vulnerable people support and treatment in the most appropriate environment. All police forces in England now have access to street triage schemes.

The £15million *Beyond Places of Safety* scheme, launched in October 2017, will improve support services for those needing urgent and emergency mental healthcare. This includes conditions such as psychosis, bipolar disorder, and personality disorders that could cause people to be a risk to themselves or others.

Police and health colleagues working in local Crisis Care Concordat partnerships have reduced the number of mental health patients being held inappropriately in police cells to just over 1,000 cases in 2016/17. It is expected that such use will fall still further thanks to changes to legislation that were introduced on 11 December 2017 that ban the use of police cells for under-18s in mental health crisis and put in place stringent controls on their use for adults.

The Government will continue to invest in new and better services across the whole spectrum of mental health conditions. In particular, we will make further improvements in early intervention, investing in community services and expanding access to round-the-clock crisis care support both in the community and in A&E.

I hope this reply is helpful.



**JACKIE DOYLE-PRICE**