



## Department of Health & Social Care

Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP  
Chair of the Health and Social Care Select Committee

31 May 2022

Dear Jeremy,

I am writing in relation to the oral evidence session for the inquiry on the impact of body image on mental and physical health on 17 May, to set out an update on the introduction of the licencing scheme for non-surgical cosmetic procedures, progress on training of senior mental health leads in schools, and our response to the Committee's report "The treatment of autistic people and people with learning disabilities". I also want to correct some of the evidence provided by another witness as it relates to the Department's work.

The Government is committed to patient safety and it's important that the regulatory framework around the cosmetics industry enables consumers to make safe and informed choices. The Health and Care Act 2022 gives the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care the power to introduce a licensing regime for non-surgical cosmetic procedures in England.

This is a complex area, and it's vital that the scope and detail of any future licensing scheme is expertly informed and proportionate to the risk of harm that specific procedures or techniques are deemed to pose. Once we have a clear timeframe for this work, I will make sure that we let the Committee know.

Regarding the status of senior mental health lead training, the Department for Education recently provided a data release outlining the progress that has been made on Green Paper commitments — <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transforming-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-provision>. The green paper committed to offering senior mental health lead training to all eligible settings in England by 2025, and new figures released on 12 May show that the Government is well on track to achieve this. Over 8,000 schools and colleges claimed a £1,200 grant to train a senior mental health lead between October 2021 and March 2022, which includes half of all state-funded secondary schools in England – well above ambitions to reach one third of settings.

Further investment of £10m in 2022-23 will mean up to 8,000 more schools and colleges – the equivalent of two-thirds of eligible settings - will be able to apply for a training grant by the end of this financial year, which will support them to promote and support the mental health and wellbeing of all pupils.

With respect to our discussion regarding the Health and Social Care Committee's report "The treatment of autistic people and people with learning disabilities", I appreciate that the Committee are keen to receive the government's response to this report and to see action in response to the recommendations made in it. As the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care set out in his letter to Barbara Keeley MP in March, my officials have been focusing their efforts on the development of the cross-government, cross-system Building the Right Support Action Plan. In doing so, we are carefully considering the recommendations of the Committee.

We expect to publish the Action Plan as soon as possible, together with RedQuadrant's independent report into Building the Right Support Funding Flows, an area which was a particular focus of the Committee's report. We will issue our response to the Committee's recommendations shortly after the publication of the Action Plan.

Finally, I am aware that Helen James, Founder of Nutriri, gave evidence on the Department for Health and Social Care Adult Weight Management Services Grant at this session. I want to bring to your attention that the data quoted by Ms James was inaccurate and would be grateful if it was not used to make comparisons or draw conclusions. This evidence was subsequently picked up by the Daily Mail resulting in an article with the misleading headline "Councils blew £30m on health scheme that saw just 220 people lose ANY weight, MPs told" This led Slimming World to contact us to voice concerns that inaccurate reporting of said data could have damaging repercussions for weight management providers.

This letter seeks to correct the evidence presented which I hope will be helpful to the Committee. The correct position is as follows:

- £30.5 of the £100 million for weight management activity, in 2021-22, was allocated to local authorities for the commissioning of tier 2 adult behavioural weight management services. The remaining money was allocated to other areas, including tier 3 and 4 services, a pilot of children weight management services, and a GP enhanced referral service.
- Provisional data from the 'second experimental official statistics report on Local Authority commissioned Adult Weight Management Services' was published on 28 April 2022.
- The figure of 220 losing 5% of their body weight does not appear in the report and has been incorrectly calculated by Ms James from other figures in the report. The correct calculation would be around 7 times higher using data submitted for Q1-Q3 so far, and will be much higher still when the full data set is available.
- There are other figures quoted by Ms James which are not in the report, and we do not recognise.
- These data are experimental - this is a new data collection and the methodology to produce these statistics is still developing
- These data are also provisional because they are not complete – they include data from 111 of the 146 local authorities. For those local authorities that did upload data some individuals will be part way through their weight management programme and so outcomes are not yet known.

- OHID is still collecting data from local authorities and weight management service providers so the figures published are expected to increase.
- Comparing them to the full grant allocation of £30.5 million is incorrect as only a small part of the grant had been spent by local authorities for the period the report covers.
- A more complete set of statistics will be published when all services funded by the 2021/22 grant have been completed.
- Services funded by the grant did not finish in December 2021 but are running until at least June 2022, with local authorities who have underspend, eligible to run services until end December 2022.

I would be happy to provide further clarification on any of these points if Committee members would find this useful.



**GILLIAN KEEGAN**