



Department of Health & Social Care

*From Maria Caulfield MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Department of Health & Social Care*

Steve Brine MP
Chair, Health and Social Care Select Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

20 March 2024

Dear Steve,

I am writing to inform you and members of the Health and Social Care Select Committee that tomorrow (21st March) the Government will publish responses to the rapid review into data on mental health inpatient settings and the Joint Committee on the draft Mental Health Bill, and lay a Written Ministerial Statement on Expected Mental Health Spend for 2024/25.

Government response to the rapid review into data on mental health inpatient settings

On 23 January 2023, the Government launched a 'rapid review' into mental health patient safety, chaired by an independent expert, Dr Geraldine Strathdee.

This review was commissioned in response to significant concerns about the treatment and safety of patients at a number of mental health inpatient settings. It considered how data and information can provide early alerts and be improved to identify risks in order to prevent patient safety incidents and support efforts to improve care in mental health inpatient settings. The review's report and recommendations were published on 28 June 2023. I would like to thank Dr Geraldine Strathdee for her extensive work and valuable contribution in leading the review.

We have carefully considered the recommendations and our response will set out how we are taking forward each recommendation. There has already been good progress towards implementation of a number of the recommendations and I have established a steering group, co-chaired with an external expert Professor Sir Louis Appleby, to work with healthcare system partners to take forward the key deliverables for each recommendation. We intend to provide an update on progress by July 2024.

Written Ministerial Statement on Expected Mental Health Spend 2024-25

The Government remains committed to expanding and transforming mental health services across England to achieve parity of esteem between mental and physical health services. Between 2018/19 and 2023/24, the NHS forecasts that spending on mental health services has increased by £4.7 billion in cash terms, compared to the £3.4 billion in cash terms set out in the NHS Long Term Plan.

The Health and Care Act 2022 introduced a statutory requirement for the Government to publish an annual statement setting out expectations for NHS mental health services spending.

This is to ensure better transparency as part of the government's commitment to parity of esteem.

I am pleased to let you and the committee know that in 2024/25 the Government expects that NHS England will meet the Mental Health Investment Standard, which requires Integrated Care Boards to increase their investment in mental health services in line with their overall increase in funding for the year. The total forecast mental health spend is projected to be £14.8 billion, which accounts for 9.01% of total recurrent spend.

The Autumn Statement 2023 funding for NHS Talking Therapies and Individual Placement Support, and additional Spring Budget 2023 funding for Individual Placement Support is included in the total mental health spend for 2024/25. This significant additional investment will support more people with mental ill-health can enter and remain in employment.

The Government is taking the long-term decisions needed to make our healthcare system faster, simpler and fairer. As a key part of that, we will continue to prioritise investment in mental health services, as evidenced by spending increasing year on year, to make progress towards parity of esteem between mental and physical health services.

Government Response to Joint Committee on the draft Mental Health Bill

The Government would like to thank the Joint Committee on the draft Mental Health Bill, its chair Baroness Buscombe, its members from both Houses and staff, for its careful and considered work scrutinising the draft Bill. We are also grateful to all the stakeholders who gave or provided oral or written evidence, and many experts by experience and members of the public who have so generously given their time.

We have carefully considered the Joint Committee's report and the Government response addresses each of the Committee's recommendations in turn. We welcome the Joint Committee's support for the draft Bill and will consider some amendments to the draft Bill, as well as further steps that can be taken without the need for primary legislation, in response to their recommendations.

It remains our intention to bring forward a Mental Health Bill when Parliamentary time allows and the Government continues to take forward non-legislative commitments to improve the care and treatment of people detained under the Act.

We are continuing to pilot models of Culturally Appropriate Advocacy, investing up to £1.5 million to provide tailored support to hundreds of people from ethnic minorities to better understand their rights when they are detained under the Mental Health Act.

NHS England has also launched the [Patient and Carer Race Equality Framework \(PCREF\)](#), for all NHS mental health trusts to embed across England. This mandatory framework will support trusts and providers to work with their local communities, patients and carers to agree and implement concrete actions to reduce racial inequalities within their services.

Improving quality, safety and pathways of care

The Government remains committed to improving the experience and outcome of individuals receiving inpatient care, whether detained under the Mental Health Act or informal inpatients.

We are investing over £400 million of funding over a 4 year period from 2020/21 to eradicate dormitories and give patients the privacy of their own ensuite bedroom. As of October 2023, over 600 beds have already been replaced across 40 sites - out of a total of 1,370 beds across 56 sites.

We are also investing £150 million in capital funding between January 2023 and April 2025 for new projects to support mental health crisis response and urgent mental health care.

NHS England is taking forward a new Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism Inpatient Quality Transformation Programme to support cultural change and a new bold, reimagined model of care for the future across all NHS-funded mental health, learning disability and autism inpatient settings. This programme will complement and further support our existing commitments to improve the quality of community care and reduce the need for inpatient care.

In June 2023, the then Secretary of State announced that the Health Services Safety Investigations Body (HSSIB) would conduct an investigation into mental health inpatient settings. The Terms of Reference were published on 30 January 2024 on the [HSSIB website](#) and the investigation is now fully underway. This investigation will identify ways we can improve mental health care, protect patients and the public, and create a safe working environment for staff. The findings from the HSSIB investigation will be published over the course of the year to drive improvements in patient safety and NHS mental health services, and the investigation will conclude by the end of 2024.

I hope that tomorrow's publications demonstrate to the Health and Social Care Select Committee our ongoing commitment to delivering on parity of esteem by improving access to, and the quality and safety of, NHS mental health services. I am also grateful to you and the Committee for its commitment to mental health, and for the attention and insights that you bring to this important agenda. I hope to count on your continued engagement.

Yours sincerely,

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

MARIA CAULFIELD