

Health and Social Care Committee

Community Mental Health Services: Commentary on the Government Response to the Committee's Fourth Report of the Session 2024–26

Seventh Report of Session 2024–26

HC 1769

Health and Social Care Committee

The Health and Social Care Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Department of Health and Social Care and its associated public bodies.

Current membership

[Layla Moran](#) (Liberal Democrat; Oxford West and Abingdon) (Chair)

[Danny Beales](#) (Labour; Uxbridge and South Ruislip)

[Ben Coleman](#) (Labour; Chelsea and Fulham)

[Dr Beccy Cooper](#) (Labour; Worthing West)

[Jen Craft](#) (Labour; Thurrock)

[Josh Fenton-Glynn](#) (Labour; Calder Valley)

[Andrew George](#) (Liberal Democrat; St Ives)

[Paulette Hamilton](#) (Labour; Birmingham Erdington)

[Alex McIntyre](#) (Labour; Gloucester)

[Joe Robertson](#) (Conservative; Isle of Wight East)

[Gregory Stafford](#) (Conservative; Farnham and Bordon)

Powers

The Committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No. 152. These are available on the internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publication

This Report, together with formal minutes relating to the Report, was Ordered by the House of Commons, on 17 March 2026, to be printed. It was published on 19 March 2026 by authority of the House of Commons.

© Parliamentary Copyright House of Commons 2026.

This publication may be reproduced under the terms of the Open Parliament Licence, which is published at www.parliament.uk/copyright.

Committee Reports are published on the Committee's website at www.parliament.uk/healthcom and in print by Order of the House.

Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Health and Social Care Committee, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. The telephone number for general enquiries is (general enquiries) 020 7219 6182; the Committee's email address is hsccom@parliament.uk. You can follow the Committee on X (formerly Twitter) using [@CommonsHealth](https://twitter.com/CommonsHealth), and on Bluesky using [@commonsHealth.parliament.uk](https://bsky.app/profile/commonsHealth.parliament.uk).

Contents

Community Mental Health Services: Commentary on the Government Response to the Committee's Fourth Report of the Session 2024–26	1
Formal minutes	5
List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament	6

Community Mental Health Services: Commentary on the Government Response to the Committee's Fourth Report of the Session 2024–26

1. On 2 December 2025, we published our report on [Community Mental Health Services](#) which called for a “fundamental reimagining of mental health care” as “trauma-informed [and] person-centred”.¹ The Government published its response to our report as a [Command Paper](#) on 11 March 2026.² In this short report we set out our initial assessment of the Government’s response.
2. We are grateful to the Government for its detailed response to our recommendations. We were encouraged by the emphasis the Government has placed on the potential of the community based mental health centres model.³ However, we are concerned that the Government is not setting these centres up to succeed and that its approach does not match its stated level of ambition. Overall, while the response contains some welcome developments, it does not set out the bold and ambitious vision we had hoped to see for the future of services and failed to engage with the detail of many of our recommendations, particularly those the Government says that it has “partially accepted”.
3. In particular, we were disappointed that the Government:
 - has not committed to extending the pilots for the community based mental health centres.⁴ We remain concerned that there will not be enough time or data to allow for a meaningful evaluation of what we

1 Health and Social Care Committee, Fourth Report of the Session 2024–26, Community Mental Health Service, [Summary](#).

2 Department of Health and Social Care, [Community mental health services: government’s response to the Health and Social Care Committee’s report](#), 11 March 2026, CP 1525

3 We referred to these as “24/7 neighbourhood mental health centres” in our report.

4 Department of Health and Social Care, [Community mental health services: government’s response to the Health and Social Care Committee’s report](#), 11 March 2026, CP 1525, Recommendation 2

believe to be a promising model. With funding for the pilots due to end in April and the evaluation not being expected until the summer, there is a real risk the six pilot centres will be left in limbo. We are also disappointed by the lack of a clear strategy to deliver a centre in every community;

- is not strengthening the Mental Health Investment Standard by placing it on a statutory footing,⁵ which would have been a welcome signal towards achieving parity of esteem between mental and physical health; and
- rejected our recommendation on expanding the use of section 75 arrangements to pool budgets across the NHS and local authorities.⁶⁷ We accept there needs to be robust accountability arrangements in place to make pooled budgets work. However, we do not think this is a reason not to encourage greater use of pooling. Given the Government's commitments on integration and community-based delivery, the Government should be actively encouraging the use of this tool. If it is not going to do so, then the onus should be on setting how else it will encourage local integration and shared ownership of outcomes across the system.

4. There have been several positive developments that the Committee wants to recognise, including:

- the £473 million funding announced for mental health services, which the Government says could be used for models like the community based mental health centres,⁸ although this funding is also expected to cover several other important areas, including services for people with learning disabilities and autism;⁹

5 Department of Health and Social Care, [Community mental health services: government's response to the Health and Social Care Committee's report](#), 11 March 2026, CP 1525, Recommendation 18

6 Department of Health and Social Care, [Community mental health services: government's response to the Health and Social Care Committee's report](#), 11 March 2026, CP 1525, Recommendation 13

7 For a discussion of how these arrangements work please see, Health and Social Care Committee, Fourth Report of the Session 2024–26, Community Mental Health Service, para 139 forward

8 Department of Health and Social Care, [Community mental health services: government's response to the Health and Social Care Committee's report](#), 11 March 2026, CP 1525, Recommendation 3

9 HC Deb, 4 March 202, [col 388WH](#)

- that since the publication of our report the Government has announced new guidance on a personalised care framework, and that this guidance will contain a focus on the role of key workers/‘named worker’ as we recommended;¹⁰
- the commitment to produce a new developmental service specification for children and young people’s intensive mental health services, and specifically that this will no longer require the provider to routinely transfer or discharge a young person from services at their 18th birthday;¹¹ and
- the welcome focus on the role of co-production in service design and development, including the significant attention given to the Patient and Carer Race Equality Framework.¹² We look forward to seeing how this commitment translates into practical actions.

5. There are also a number of areas where positive high-level commitments have been made, though we await further detail. These include:

- the Modern Service Framework for mental health. This appears to be the main vehicle through which the Government will decide whether to take forward several of our recommendations, including on waiting time standards¹³ and physical health checks for individuals with severe mental illnesses.¹⁴ Given the emphasis being placed on this Framework the Government needs to set out clear accountability arrangements for its implementation and explain how it will avoid the delivery gaps we’ve seen with other well intentioned policy documents. This is particularly important given the Government’s rejection of our recommendation to conduct a formal review of the Community Mental Health Framework;¹⁵ and

10 Department of Health and Social Care, [Community mental health services: government’s response to the Health and Social Care Committee’s report](#), 11 March 2026, CP 1525, Recommendation 8

11 Department of Health and Social Care, [Community mental health services: government’s response to the Health and Social Care Committee’s report](#), 11 March 2026, CP 1525, Recommendation 9

12 Department of Health and Social Care, [Community mental health services: government’s response to the Health and Social Care Committee’s report](#), 11 March 2026, CP 1525, Recommendation 1

13 Department of Health and Social Care, [Community mental health services: government’s response to the Health and Social Care Committee’s report](#), 11 March 2026, CP 1525, Recommendation 10

14 Department of Health and Social Care, [Community mental health services: government’s response to the Health and Social Care Committee’s report](#), 11 March 2026, CP 1525, Recommendation 11

15 Department of Health and Social Care, [Community mental health services: government’s response to the Health and Social Care Committee’s report](#), 11 March 2026, CP 1525, Recommendation 2

- the 10 Year Workforce Plan. The Government referenced this Plan several times in response to our recommendations about the staffing needs for community mental health services. While there was some new information provided, the response did not provide detail on what specifically the Plan will contain on staff working in community mental health services or on the role of key professional groups such as mental health social workers.¹⁶
6. The Committee will continue to hold the Government to account for its performance in this area. We have already announced a joint inquiry with the Education Committee on children and young people’s mental health services¹⁷ and have commissioned our Independent Expert Panel to conduct an evaluation of the support young people receive when moving from children’s to adult health and social care services, which will cover transitions between mental health services.

16 Department of Health and Social Care, [Community mental health services: government’s response to the Health and Social Care Committee’s report](#), 11 March 2026, CP 1525, Recommendation 19 -20

17 Health and Social Care Committee and Education Committee, [Children and Young People’s Mental Health](#)

Formal minutes

Tuesday 17 March 2026

Members present:

Layla Moran, in the Chair

Danny Beales

Jen Craft

Josh Fenton-Glynn

Alex McIntyre

Greg Stafford

Community Mental Health Services: Commentary on the Government Response to the Committee's Fourth Report of the Session 2024–26

Draft Report (*Community Mental Health Services: Commentary on the Government Response to the Committee's Fourth Report of the Session 2024–26*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraph 1 to 6 agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Seventh Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Adjournment

Adjourned till Wednesday 18 March at 9.15 am

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Session 2024–26

Number	Title	Reference
6th	Palliative Care	HC 1763
5th	First 1000 days: a renewed focus	HC 802
4th	Community Mental Health Services	HC 566
3rd	Black Maternal Health	HC 895
2nd	Adult Social Care Reform: the cost of inaction	HC 368
1st	Appointment of the Chair of NHS England	HC 743
4th Special	Evaluation of Palliative care in England: Government Response	HC 1722
3rd Special	Expert Panel: Evaluation of Palliative care in England	HC 632
2nd Special	Expert Panel: Evaluation on meeting patient safety recommendations: Government Response	HC 617
1st Special	Pharmacy: Government Response	HC 602