

Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP, Chair, Health and Social Care Committee  
House of Commons  
London SW1A 0AA

7 May 2021

Dear Mr. Hunt,

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to present evidence to your committee in March.

As requested at the Health and Social Care oral evidence session on the 23 March, this letter provides further information on key areas raised including; the Green Paper Ambitions, provider collaboratives, inpatients and suicide prevention studies.

NHS England is working hard to transform and improve Children and Young People's Mental Health (CYP MH) services. We are doing this through working with partners across the whole system. Our aim is to ensure appropriate support is available when and where children and young people need it, including moving towards more early intervention and treatment in the community.

The NHS Long Term Plan (LTP) remains the roadmap to do this and despite the pandemic we continue to make good progress:

- We have exceeded the Five Year Forward View for Mental Health target of 70,000 additional CYP accessing treatment by 2020/21, a year early and have maintained access rates during the pandemic.
- Over 180 Mental Health Support Teams are operational across around 3,000 schools and colleges and 15% of pupils.
- The NHS is now treating more children and young people with an eating disorder than ever before as cases increased significantly during the pandemic.
- We stood up all-age 24/7 urgent mental health lines across the country so that children, young people, families and carers can get urgent help whenever they need it.
- Our NHS-led Provider Collaborative programme is working to support care to be delivered closer to home and re-invest the savings they make into community provision.

Despite this progress, we know there is further to go. The NHS Long Term Plan set a 10 year goal that 100% of children and young people who need specialist care can access. We are committed to improving the level and quality of the offer including challenging the current and future models of support.

### **Children and Young People's Mental Health Green Paper**

The Committee requested further information on a number of points related to the delivery of the CYPMH Green Paper Ambitions, these are set out below.

We have asked the Department for Education to update the Committee on why the Senior Mental Health Lead training procurement was paused in January 2020. NHS England is not responsible delivery of that ambition.,

We are pleased to inform the Committee that our current trajectory for Mental Health Support Team (MHST) expansion surpasses our previous targets. We expect to deliver our commitment of 20% to 25% coverage by April 2022, a year ahead of schedule, and to continue expanding thereafter, reaching national

coverage of 30% by 2023. Within this expansion we are committed to promoting equality of access and outcomes and addressing need and health inequalities across and between groups and areas.

The Green Paper Consultation Response estimated that for full national roll-out of MHST, a workforce of 8,000 staff would be needed by 2027/28, although the actual numbers required may change based on performance and evaluation. Each MHST will have a number of trained staff, including a new role of Education Mental Health Practitioners (EMHPs), supervised by existing, experienced Mental Health Staff. As of March 2021, training for over 1,100 EMPHs has been commissioned. 371 EMHPs have qualified and 752 are currently undertaking training. Alongside these EMHPs, at least 383 senior clinicians and managers, 23 support workers and 73 administrators have been recruited, giving a total of over 1,600 members of staff recruited to MHSTs so far.

## **Provider Collaboratives**

The Committee also asked if there are structural barriers to speeding up the reduction in the number of young people being cared for in hospital as opposed the community. Factors which can inhibit the collective ambition to care for more people in the community can include:

- The range of different commissioners responsible for different parts of the system: including Local Authorities, Local NHS Commissioners (CCGs), and Regional Specialised Commissioning Teams;
- The need to rebalance investment across inpatient and community services;
- Increasing the capacity and capability of the workforce.

NHS-led Provider Collaboratives are currently being implemented across specialised mental health, learning disability and autism services. We have committed that by 2023/24 all appropriate specialised mental health services, and learning disability and autism services, will be managed through NHS-led Provider Collaboratives.

An NHS-led Provider Collaborative is a group of providers of specialised mental health, learning disability and autism services who have agreed to work together to improve the care pathway for their local population. They will do this by taking responsibility for the budget and clinical pathway for their given population. The Provider Collaborative will be led by an NHS Provider, accountable to NHSE/I for the commissioning of high-quality specialised services. Provider Collaboratives will work to ensure there is local reinvestment in community-based services and pathways, improving the pathway of care and the outcomes and experience of people using services, their families and carers.

This model has been piloted for two years across 15 pilots and demonstrated:

- Over 550 people returned from care they were receiving away from their home, family and friends;
- Over £30m savings invested into new services in two years across 14 pilots;
- New crisis services developed such as Children and Young People's crisis teams, assertive outreach teams and alternative to admission services;
- Secure women's step-down services and secure community services established.
- One New Care Model delivered inpatient reductions of 42% for Children and Young people with Learning Disability and Autism within 18 months, reinvesting savings into an Intensive Support Team.

Furthermore, the NHS Long Term Plan sets out a road map for health and care to become joined up locally around people's needs. This has been further crystallised through the publication of the February 2021 White Paper; *Integration and innovation: working together to improve health and social care for all*. The emerging direction of travel will see all parts of health and care joined together through local collaborative systems; Integrated Care Systems. The principle of collaboration is a key driver for this change, as is enabling local decision making focussed on the needs of local populations.

## **Inpatients**

Our firm view is that patients deserve the very best care and to be treated with the upmost respect wherever they are in the NHS. The quality of care in inpatient services are a key area of work and concern.

We are improving inpatient capacity and quality and we have made significant progress nationally. Additional resources were made available to inpatient services to support with winter pressures. The National Specialised commissioning team are monitoring these schemes and will be evaluating the programme to ensure maximum benefit is being realised by the provider initiatives. Further to this we are making additional funding available in 2021/22 for inpatient services to use over a medium-term basis to improve and expand their offer.

This progress has been affected by closures across the CYPMH inpatient estate due to Covid pressures and increased acuity which has put significant strain on the whole system. Contrary to recent media coverage, there do continue to be beds available, but there have been capacity challenges in some localities and there have been some instances of units not meeting CQC standards.

We continue to prioritise inpatient care and improvements to it, however in the longer term. The increase in community provision, as set out in the NHS LTP, is intended to ease the demand on inpatient settings through providing increased access to early interventions.

Indeed, the whole mental health section of the Long Term Plan is based on the aim to boost community provision so we can reduce reliance on beds, ultimately offering higher quality care for our patients. The mission of improving community provision and ensuring beds are there for those in the most acute need is a key part not just of the work of the NHS, but of the career of our top clinicians in mental health.

It is very important to recognise that within the funding available – and the workforce constraints in mental health that have been well known by all for decades – we cannot go substantially faster than the trajectory we already are on.

## **Suicide Prevention**

Following consultation with our clinical advisors we have concluded that there would not be merit in commissioning a Hogan and Black type study because the number of CYP suicides is (thankfully) too small to be able to make such a study feasible. and the numbers associated with any individual service is very small indeed.

The NHS is working hard to better understand suicide amongst all age groups, especially young people. An essential part of that work is the National Child Mortality Database (NCMD), established in 2019, the first of its kind anywhere in the world. It enables us to monitor data trends and identify emerging themes following deaths in children and young people, including deaths by suicide in an inpatient setting. We will continue to monitor the data; respond to trends and to modifiable factors identified through the NCMD data to help with recommendations regarding policy and prevention.

Through the NHS LTP, we are investing £57million in suicide prevention from 2019/20. This will see investment in all areas of the country by 2023/24 to support local suicide prevention plans and establish suicide bereavement support services. We have ensured that the suicide prevention funding for local areas includes addressing self-harm and children and young people with a Learning Disability and/or Autism as a priority focus.

Thank you again for you and your committees continued support in improving mental health services.

Yours sincerely,

**Claire Murdoch CBE**, National Mental Health Director, NHS England

**Professor Tim Kendall**, National Clinical Director for Mental Health, NHS England