



HM Treasury, 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ

Ms Jennette Arnold OBE AM
Chair of the London Assembly
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London
SE1 2AA

13 May 2020

Dear Ms Arnold,

Thank you for your letter of 26 March to the Chancellor of the Exchequer about the outcome of the London Assembly Plenary meeting on 5 March. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area.

I would like to thank the Assembly for sharing this motion on an important issue. I will first respond to your "call on the Government to properly fund CAMHS in its forthcoming budget and provide CCGs with clear input and output targets".

Through funding for the NHS Long Term Plan, children and young people's mental health services will grow faster than the overall spend on mental health, which will itself be growing faster than the overall NHS budget. To ensure that funding is invested in mental health services, clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) are required to meet the Mental Health Investment Standard (MHIS). This requires CCGs to increase their spending on mental health by at least as much as their overall budget increases.

NHS planning guidance for 2019/20 sets out that all CCGs are required to meet the MHIS and, through the NHS Mental Health Dashboard, the Department of Health and Social Care are measuring the performance of the NHS in delivering on this and other requirements. The Dashboard, which brings together quarterly local, regional and national data across mental health services, shows that for the first time, all CCGs increased the amount spent on mental health in 2018/19 by at least as much as their overall budget increases.

Turning to your second ask, calling on "Government to increase significantly resources for teachers and school staff dealing with students and their own mental health issues".

Government remains committed to implementing the core proposals set out in response to the consultation 'Transforming children and young people's mental health provision: A Green Paper', including – wherever possible – adapting support during the outbreak to the circumstances schools and colleges, and children and young people face. The full consultation response can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/transforming-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-provision-a-green-paper>.

The Government's response to the Green Paper consultation set out how we will:

- Incentivise every school or college to identify and train a Senior Lead for Mental Health;
- Create new mental health support teams (MHSTs) in and near schools and colleges; and
- Pilot a four-week waiting time for specialist NHS services, so that there is swifter access to specialist NHS services for those children and young people who need it.

It should be noted of course, that within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, our priority remains to keep children, young people and those who work with them safe, and to minimise disruption to everyday life and not unduly effect the progression to further education or employment. This includes the impact on the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people.

New services like MHSTs, and the support they provide for children, young people and their parents/carers alongside established services across health, education, children's services and the independent sector, are going to be extremely important as a result of Covid-19 and during the recovery from the pandemic. Where in place, MHSTs are actively considering how they continue to deliver a service to support children and young people experiencing mild to moderate mental health issues.

All providers are encouraged to consider how delivering care digitally might help maintain continuity of care and make best use of resources, and mental health trusts have been asked to ensure there are 24/7 open access telephone lines for urgent NHS mental health support, advice and triage for people of all ages.

In addition to the proposals set out in the consultation response, there are several resources available for teachers and school staff dealing with students and their own mental health issues, including during the Covid-19 outbreak. The Department for Education has signposted resources on supporting and promoting mental wellbeing among the list of resource to help children to learn at home. The Department's guidance about safeguarding children in all education settings during Covid-19 also includes information on mental health. It advises that teachers should be aware of the impact of current events in setting expectations of pupils' work at home and points to guidance on mental health and behaviour: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers/coronavirus-covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers>

In addition, Health Education England's educational mental health platform, MindEd, contains resources for parents and professionals on children and young people's mental health: <https://www.minded.org.uk/>. Public Health England's resource 'Rise Above' includes RSHE lesson plans for schools, guidance on mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic for adults and on supporting children and young people: <https://riseabove.org.uk/>.

Thank you for taking the time to make me aware of the London Assembly's concerns.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Barclay', is centered on a light grey rectangular background.

RT HON STEVE BARCLAY MP