



**Craig Whittaker MP**

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## **MENTAL HEALTH POLICY**

Thank you for contacting me about mental health.

I agree that tackling poor mental health must be a priority and Ministers have legislated to treat it with the same importance as physical health. Progress is being made with more Government investment in mental health and an estimated 1,400 more people accessing mental health services every day compared to 2010 – up 40 per cent, as well as around 750,000 more people accessing talking therapies since 2009/10.

In February 2016, an independent Mental Health Taskforce published a new national strategy, setting out an ambitious vision for mental health services.

To make these recommendations a reality, the Government will spend an additional £1 billion on mental health by 2020-21 so that people receive the right care in the right place when they need it most. This includes increasing the number of people completing talking therapies by 600,000 per year, and helping 20,000 more people to find or stay in work through individual placement support and talking therapies.

A further £1.25 billion for perinatal and children and young people's mental health, helping professionals to intervene early and more than doubling the number of pregnant women or new mothers receiving mental health support; and training around 1,700 new therapists. To support teenagers with eating disorders, the Government is investing £150 million.

The Government has also introduced the first-ever mental health access and waiting time standards, so that 75 per cent of people referred for talking therapies to treat common mental health problems such as depression and anxiety start their treatment within 6 weeks, and 95 per cent within 18 weeks. These targets have been met and the latest data shows that in May 2016, 84 per cent of people waited less than 6 weeks and 97 per cent of people waited less than 18 weeks.

I am encouraged to note that the Government has announced reform to mental health policy in the latest Queen's Speech, in order to continue to reduce the number of people detained in police cells under the Mental Health Act.

Also, patients experiencing psychosis for the first time must be treated within two weeks.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP