



## Craig Whittaker MP

CALDER VALLEY

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### Seni's Law

Thank you for contacting me about Seni's Law and the operation of the Mental Health Act.

The Government is preparing the ground for significant reform of mental health services. In October 2017, the Prime Minister announced that the Government would embark on a comprehensive review of the Mental Health Act, which has remained unchanged for more than three decades.

The review will be led by Professor Sir Simon Wessely, a former president of the Royal College of Psychiatrists. His remit is to consider the needs of all users of mental health services and their families, and propose changes to agencies' procedures and practices, especially those involving physical restraint.

Specifically, the Government shares the concerns that have led to the introduction of the Private Member's Bill on the use of force in mental health units. It is aware that existing practices and methods can be out of step with the understanding and principles which should underpin a modern mental health system, a system which must be responsive to the needs of service users and their families. For that reason, I can assure you that Ministers will listen sympathetically to the proposals of the Bill's supporters.

Moreover, the Wessely review will specifically address issues regarding the detention of people going through mental health crises. As I understand it, the Government expects some of the solutions to the problems that have been identified to lie in the practice, leadership and culture of the agencies involved as well as, very possibly, legislation.

The review will examine all existing practices; among the specific points to be investigated will be the disproportionately high rates of detention of people from ethnic minorities and ways of reducing the number of people detained in police cells under the Mental Health Act.

I hope that all those with experience and knowledge of these vital matters will contribute to the debate.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig Whittaker'.

Craig Whittaker MP