



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

*From Nadine Dorries MP  
Minister of State for Patient Safety,  
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The Rt Hon Sir George Howarth MP  
By email to: [george.howarth.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:george.howarth.mp@parliament.uk)

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Dear Sir George,

Thank you for your correspondence of 10 June to the Prime Minister on behalf of a number of your constituents about young people's mental health and the #FundTheHubs campaign. Your correspondence has been forwarded to this department.

I appreciate your constituents' concerns. I would like to thank all mental health charities for all the support they have provided during the COVID-19 pandemic and throughout lockdowns.

We recognise that the public has shown great resilience during these challenging times, but we know that the pandemic has had an impact on the mental health and wellbeing of many people. For those with severe needs or in crisis, all NHS mental health providers have established 24-hour, seven-day urgent mental health helplines. We are absolutely committed to supporting the mental wellbeing of children and young people.

In 2018, we announced the first 25 trailblazer sites delivering 59 mental health support teams in and near schools and colleges. Twelve of these establishments are working with NHS England and NHS Improvement to test the waiting time and accessibility of the service, as well as the feasibility and impact on resources it would have if the standard delivery time was set at four weeks. This will inform a recommendation to Government on the potential development and rollout of access and waiting-time standards for all children and young people who need specialist mental health services.

The mental health support teams support the mental health needs of children and young people in primary, secondary and further education (ages 5 to 18) and use an evidence-based approach to provide early intervention on some mental health and emotional wellbeing issues, such as mild to moderate anxiety.

Schools and colleges are encouraged to develop a senior mental health lead role to provide strategic oversight and lead a 'whole school' (or college) approach to mental health. These leaders will also work with mental health support teams wherever possible, establishing a holistic approach to mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges.

Colleagues at the Department for Education launched the £7million Wellbeing for Education Recovery programme, which provides free expert training, support and resources for staff dealing with children and young people experiencing additional pressures from the pandemic, including trauma, anxiety and grief. The programme builds on the success of the Wellbeing for Education Return used by more than 90 per cent of local authorities since its launch last summer.

In addition, the Department for Education has convened a Mental Health in Education Action Group, which will look specifically at how we support young people with their wellbeing as they return to school, college and university. On 4 February, the Prime Minister appointed Dr Alex George as Youth Mental Health Ambassador to advise Government and raise the profile of mental health education and wellbeing in schools, colleges and universities. Dr George will also sit on the Mental Health in Education Action Group.

The *Recovery Action Plan* published in March highlights further initiatives to place mental health at the centre of Government policy, including through the development and testing of a Mental Health Impact Assessment for all new policies, and continuation of the ministerial group examining the impacts of the pandemic on mental health and wellbeing.

Under the *Recovery Action Plan*, the NHS will extend its talking therapies services, which offer confidential treatment for conditions such as anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. This expansion is backed by an additional £38million and will support 1.6 million people to access services in 2021/22.

The Government is investing £79million to ensure more children and young people gain access to increased mental health services, including:

- almost three million children in England being supported by more mental health support teams in schools and colleges;
- approximately 22,500 more children and young people gaining access to community mental health services; and
- 2,000 more children and young people gaining access to eating disorder services.

I hope this reply is helpful.



**NADINE DORRIES**