



June 2021

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about the provision of mental health services for children and young people.

It is incredibly important to protect and support the health of children and young people in our society. In recent years we have made huge progress in understanding mental health issues, and I support efforts to transform children and young people's mental health for the better. Approximately 10% of 5 to 16 year olds have a clinically diagnosable mental health problem. Since 2015, an additional £1.4 billion has been invested to transform children and young people's mental health services.

The Children and Young People's Mental Health Green Paper sets out ambitious proposals to improve mental health services for children and young people, together with over £300 million of funding. This will incentivise and support schools and colleges to train designated leaders for their pupils' mental health, and introduce new mental health teams, both of which will ease pressure on NHS mental health services.

The NHS Long Term Plan makes a commitment to offering children and young people the best start in life. As part of this, there is an additional commitment to deliver on the promises made in the *Five Year Forward View for Mental Health* so that 70,000 more children and young people will access treatment each year.

By 2023/2024 at least an additional 345,000 children and young people aged 0-25 will be able to access support via NHS funded mental health services and school or college-based Mental Health Support Teams. In particular, I welcome the Secretary of State's announcement that £79 million from the additional £500 million for mental health announced at the 2021 Spending Review will be allocated to accelerate the commitment to expand these services.

Early intervention is absolutely vital in the fight against eating disorders and everyone with an eating disorder must have access to timely treatment. That is why I am glad that an ambitious new access standard has been introduced, aiming for 95% of children (up to 19 years old) with eating disorders to receive treatment within a week for urgent cases and four weeks for routine cases by the end of 2020.

I know that this has been a particularly challenging year, but be assured that NHS staff have been working extremely hard to refer people as quickly as possible. I am certain that services will continue to improve, particularly as NHS services return to normal following the disruption of the past year.

With more than 4.5 million children and young people helped by Childline to date, I would like to pay tribute to the NSPCC for providing this invaluable service. I am encouraged by the continued commitment of £2 million a year to the NSPCC to assist with the running of Childline.



**Chris Heaton-Harris**  
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Those growing up in Britain today experience a range of ongoing pressures and risks in a changing World, and Childline provides them with a safe, supportive and confidential space that empowers them to improve their wellbeing.

Access to mental health support for children and young people during the COVID-19 outbreak is absolutely vital. NHS services remain open and leading mental health charities have been supported to deliver additional services through the £5 million Coronavirus Mental Health Response Fund.

The NHS has also set up 24/7 open access telephone lines for urgent mental health support for people of all ages, for example through the Samaritans on 116 123 or through Childline on 0800 1111.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP**  
**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**