



Department
of Health &
Social Care

*From Nadine Dorries MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Patient Safety,
Suicide Prevention and Mental Health*

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Your Reference: 313362
Our Reference: PFD-1207916

Ms Alison Patricia Mutch
HM Senior Coroner, Manchester South
HM Coroner's Court
1 Mount Tabor Street
Stockport SK1 3AG

16th April 2020

Dear Ms Mutch

Thank you for your correspondence of 3 March 2020 to Matt Hancock about the tragic death of Shaun Turner.

I would like to begin by saying how sorry I was to read of the circumstances of Mr Turner's death and I offer my deepest sympathies to his family and those who loved him. I can appreciate how distressing his loss must be.

Your report raises important concerns about access to mental health services and I would like to provide assurance that the Government and the NHS are taking steps to ensure that no one faces a long wait to access mental health support.

We have introduced the first ever access and waiting time standards for mental health services, including standards for early intervention for people experiencing a first episode of psychosis and accessing psychological and talking therapies. These are being met or are on track for delivery. In addition, the NHS has committed to testing and rolling out comprehensive waiting time standards for adults and children over the next decade.

We are expanding access to talking and psychological therapies and improving quality through the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) programme¹. Already, over 1 million people a year are starting treatment and we are aiming to increase access to psychological therapies for an additional 600,000 people with common mental health problems each year by 2020/21. The NHS Long Term Plan² commits to ensuring that an additional 380,000 adults and older adults will be able to access NICE³-approved IAPT services by 2023/24.

¹ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/mental-health/adults/iapt/>

² <https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/areas-of-work/mental-health/>

³ National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

In December 2019, 98.4 per cent of people who completed a course of IAPT treatment waited less than 18 weeks to start treatment and 88.6 per cent waited less than six weeks⁴.

The NHS Long Term Plan also commits to specific waiting times targets for emergency mental health services which will take effect for the first time from 2020/21 onwards and will align with the equivalent targets for emergency physical health services.

We recognise the need for people experiencing a mental health crisis to get the care that they need quickly. Every local health service has now signed up to having a round the clock community mental health crisis service by 2021, with people whose needs might be escalating to crisis point able to self-refer in the same way they can for urgent physical health care. More than £200million of national funding has been allocated to local areas to transform urgent and emergency mental health care and provide new, alternative forms of provision, such as safe havens and crisis cafes. An additional £140million will bolster these services further from 2021 onwards.

We know that every suicide is a tragedy that has a devastating and enduring impact on families and communities. In January 2019, we published the first Cross-Government Suicide Prevention Workplan⁵, which sets out an ambitious programme across national and local government and the NHS. It will see every local authority, mental health trust and prison in the country implementing suicide prevention policies.

Finally, we are investing £57million in suicide prevention through the NHS Long Term Plan. All areas of the country will see investment by 2023/24 to support local suicide prevention plans and establish bereavement support services.

I hope this response is helpful. Thank you for bringing these concerns to my attention.



NADINE DORRIES

⁴ <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/psychological-therapies-report-on-the-use-of-iapt-services/december-2019-final-including-reports-on-the-iapt-pilots-and-quarter-3-2019-20-data>

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/suicide-prevention-cross-government-plan>