



Department
of Health &
Social Care

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

To all MPs in England

23 November 2020

Dear Colleague,

Wellbeing and mental health support plan for COVID-19

I am writing to draw your attention to the enclosed Wellbeing and Mental Health Covid Support Plan, which the government has published today.

This publication sets out the provision that is in place in England to support people's mental health and wellbeing this winter.

For the general population, we will continue to promote public health resources such as the [Every Mind Matters](#) platform and [gov.uk guidance](#) on mental health and wellbeing as key sources of expert advice and tools to support mental wellbeing.

We have taken steps to ensure children and young people have the support that they need. Schools and colleges have been equipped with expert advice and resources to help support their pupil's wellbeing through the joint Department for Health and Social Care and Department for Education £8m Education for Wellbeing Return scheme. Public Health England launched a wellbeing awareness campaign to coincide with schools return in September and also adapted its Every Mind Matters mental wellbeing resources to include tailored content and advice to support children and young people and parents.

As with the first wave, NHS England mental health services and those provided by the voluntary sector remain open to support individuals who need specialist help. Our community, talking therapies and children and young people's services have deployed innovative digital tools to connect with people as well as providing ongoing face to face support where appropriate.

We will help mental health services to reduce pressures on inpatient beds and to keep patients safe over winter, backed by £50m of funding to boost capacity and support good-quality discharge from inpatient settings.

During the first wave, all Trusts in England established all-age 24/7 phone lines providing people experiencing a mental health crisis with access urgent support and advice. These sources of support remain available, and a new urgent NHS mental health helpline service finder can be found at [NHS.UK](https://www.nhs.uk) to enable individuals to quickly locate their nearest source of crisis support.

We are taking actions to reach out and protect the physical health of individuals with Severe Mental Illness (SMI). NHS England has issued communications to GP surgeries asking practices to identify people with SMI who are clinically vulnerable, and offering those people comprehensive physical health checks and follow up interventions, free flu vaccines (if they are eligible), and a care plan review as appropriate. Services are also encouraged to conduct rapid outreach and engagement activity with SMI patients and carers, partnering with local VCS partners where appropriate. Public Health England will also issue tailored communications to those with SMI encouraging them to protect their physical health and take up this support.

This plan demonstrates the government's firm commitment to supporting everyone's mental health and wellbeing over the course of winter, and beyond. Next year, the NHS will receive around an additional £500m to address waiting times for mental health services, give more people the mental health support they need, and invest in the NHS workforce.

We will also continue work across departments to consider and respond to the longer-term mental health and wellbeing impacts of the pandemic and will set out further details in the new year.

Yours sincerely,



NADINE DORRIES

MINISTER OF STATE FOR PATIENT SAFETY, SUICIDE PREVENTION AND MENTAL HEALTH