



Department
of Health &
Social Care

*From Maria Caulfield
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for
Mental Health and Women's Health Strategy*

39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

Alison Mutch
HM Senior Coroner
Coroner's Court
1 Mount Tabor Street
Stockport
SK1 3AG

13 December 2022

Dear Ms Mutch,

Thank you for your letter of 9 February 2022 to the Secretary of State about the death of Michelle Jennings. I am replying as Minister with responsibility for Mental Health and thank you for the additional time allowed.

Firstly, I would like to say how saddened I was to read of the circumstances of Ms Jennings's death, and I offer my sincere condolences to her family and loved ones. The circumstances your report describes are very concerning and I am grateful to you for bringing these matters to my attention.

With regard to access to mental health services, we know how vital timely mental health support is to ensure that a person does not experience a mental health crisis.

We know that nationally there has been, and continues, to be a gap between the prevalence of mental health conditions and the ability of a person to access services. For many people in crisis, the NHS can, and does, provide lifesaving, life-changing care. Due to historical underinvestment, however, we are building from a low base in mental health care.

This is why we are committed to increasing investment in, and improving access to, mental health services. Under the NHS Long Term Plan¹, by 2023/24 mental health services will receive £2.3billion more than in 2018/19, which will mean that 2 million more people will have access to mental health services, including an additional 370,000 adults with severe mental illnesses.

Through the Plan, we are improving joined-up working across the NHS and with other statutory services. Since April 2021, all areas are receiving significant additional, ring-fenced funding to develop fully integrated primary and community mental health services built around Primary Care Networks which includes improved access to psychological therapies, improved physical health care, employment support,

¹ <https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/nhs-long-term-plan-version-1.2.pdf>

personalised and trauma informed care, medicines management and support for self-harm and coexisting substance use. By 2023/24, this investment will amount to almost £1billion extra per year for adults and older adults with severe mental illness.

Twelve early implementer sites have been in receipt of ongoing transformation funding since 2019/20 to test new integrated models of primary and community mental health care in line with the Long Term Plan and the Community Mental Health Framework for Adults and Older Adults.

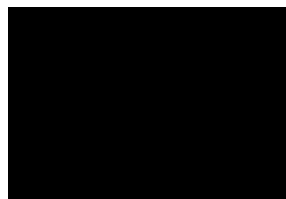
All Integrated Care Systems have started work to transform their community mental health pathways from 2021/22 in line with published guidance, and ensure the transformed models exist in all Primary Care Networks by 2023/24. These models will enable people with severe mental illness to have greater choice and control over their care, and support them to live well in their communities

We know that delivery of our ambitions for mental health services depends on growth of the mental health workforce through education and training, recruitment and retention. As of June 2022 there were 133,573 full time equivalent people working directly on mental health, across NHS trusts and NHS foundation trusts. This is an increase of over 24,400 new staff since March 2016.

More generally, we launched a 12-week public call for evidence on what can be done across government in the longer term to support mental health, wellbeing and suicide prevention. This closed on 7 July 2022. We received submissions from over 5,000 respondents representing a broad range of stakeholders from across England and we are currently considering these.

I know this will reply will be of little consolation to Ms Jennings' family, friends, and all who loved her; I nevertheless hope it assures you of our aims to improve access to mental health support, prevent people reaching a mental health crisis, and ultimately saving lives.

Kinds regards,



MARIA CAULFIELD MP