



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

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

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James Bennett  
Area Coroner for Birmingham  
and Solihull  
Coroner's Court  
50 Newton Street  
Birmingham  
B4 6NE

9 November 2023

Dear Mr Bennett,

Thank you for your letter of 14 July 2023, to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Steve Barclay, about the death of Peter Fleming. I am replying as Minister with responsibility for Mental Health.

Firstly, I would like to say how saddened I was to read of the circumstances of Mr Fleming's death and I offer my sincere condolences to his 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.

A number of the concerns you have raised in this report relate to policies and training requirements at a local level. It is for these local areas to ensure they have the processes in place to support mental health services, so that people with suspected mental health problems receive the appropriate response at all times.

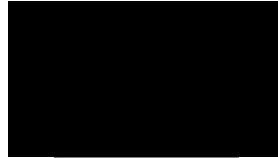
In your report a concern was also raised regarding the lack of resources available at a national level which restricts patients from getting the mental health support that they require. We are investing at least £2.3 billion of additional funding a year by March 2024 to expand and transform mental health services in England so that two million more people can get the mental health support they need. We also provided a record investment of £15.9 billion in mental health across 2022/23, representing 27.7% more than in 2018/19.

The responsibility for the staffing and operations of mental health services lies with the relevant trust, however, we do recognise the wider need to increase capacity in NHS mental health services. Nationally, the mental health workforce increased by over 10,000 full-time equivalent staff in June 2023 compared to June 2022, and our aim is to grow the mental health workforce by an additional 27,000 staff by March 2024, compared to 2018/19.

A concern was also raised regarding a lack of communication between different health organisations. We are working towards better integration of services through the role of integrated care systems. As part of this, we are integrating services for serious mental illness, expanding community mental health services to reduce reliance on inpatient treatment, so that

people are supported to stay well in their communities. The Government announced in January that it would publish a Major Conditions Strategy, setting out a shift towards integrated, whole-person care. The Strategy will tackle the six conditions that contribute most to morbidity and mortality in England, including mental ill health. The Major Conditions Strategy: case for change and our strategic framework was published on 21 August.

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



**MARIA CAULFIELD MP**