



Department
of Health &
Social Care

From Maria Caulfield MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Primary Care and Patient Safety

39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

020 7210 4850

PO-1353512

Iain Stewart MP

By email to: iain.stewart.mp@parliament.uk

27 September 2021

Dear Iain,

Thank you for your correspondence of 10 August on behalf of a number of your constituents, about the Teenage Cancer Trust's #NotOK campaign.

I would firstly like to reassure your constituents that cancer services remain an absolute priority for the NHS, and the Government is committed to investing in innovative treatments for cancer. I would also like to thank all cancer charities for the incredible work they do and all the support they have provided during the COVID-19 pandemic.

I also note the excellent *Hand2Hold* guidance from the Teenage Cancer Trust and Young Lives vs Cancer, which is targeted at supporting young people with cancer to attend appointments. We have distributed it to all our cancer alliances in England, to raise awareness.

NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) has established a 'task and finish' group to review psychosocial support for people affected by cancer, including young people. NHSE&I is also developing a 'toolkit' of existing good practice and guidelines to help systems to improve psychological support and mental health care.

The NHS *Long Term Plan* states that, where appropriate, everyone diagnosed with cancer, including young people, should receive a personalised care and support plan based on a holistic needs assessment, an end-of-treatment summary, and health and wellbeing information and support, including for mental health needs. All patients should have access to the right expertise and support.

For those needing specialist care from a mental health service, the NHS has committed to fast-track the expansion of children's and young people's mental health services, backed by an additional £79 million investment.

Each patient's mental health support requirements will be considered by a multidisciplinary team as part of the holistic approach to care. We know how important it is that people experiencing mental ill health have access to timely support, not least children and young people with cancer.

I would like to reassure your constituents that mental health funding for children and young people is a priority. On 27 March, we published our COVID-19 mental health and wellbeing recovery action plan, backed by an additional £500 million of targeted investment, to ensure that we have the right support in place. This includes the £79 million to significantly expand children's mental health services announced on 5 March, which will allow around

22,500 more children and young people to access community health services, 2,000 more children and young people to access eating disorder services, and a faster increase in the coverage of mental health support teams in schools and colleges over 2021/22.

The £500 million is in addition to our aims through the NHS Long Term Plan to invest at least £2.3 billion more a year in mental health services by 2023/24, and provide 345,000 more children and young people with access to specialist NHS-funded mental health care if they need it.

I hope this reply reassures you and your constituents that supporting young cancer patients every step of the way, including with their mental health, is an absolute priority for this Government.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Maria', with a stylized flourish above the name.

MARIA CAULFIELD MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR PRIMARY CARE AND
PATIENT SAFETY