



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

October 2019

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about eating disorders and I appreciate how challenging this condition can be to live with. I have a close friend who has to deal with an eating disorder on a daily basis and I am well aware of the issues and strains these conditions can bring.

With eating disorders on the rise, please let me assure you that tackling these disorders through early and effective treatment remains a key priority of our NHS.

Early intervention is absolutely vital in the fight against eating disorders and everyone with an eating disorder must have access to timely treatment. That is why I am glad that an ambitious new access standard is being introduced, aiming for 95 per cent of children (up to 19 years old) with eating disorders to receive treatment within a week for urgent cases and four weeks for routine cases by 2020. I am pleased the latest quarterly figures on waiting times indicate the NHS is on track to meet this target.

As part of the NHS Long Term Plan, published in January 2019 and delivering a £33.9bn cash funding increase, the next five years will see boosted investment in children and young people's eating disorder services. The NHS is on track to deliver the new waiting time standards for eating disorder services by 2020/21. Four fifths of children and young people with an eating disorder now receive treatment within one week in urgent cases and four weeks for non-urgent cases. As need continues to rise, extra investment will allow the NHS to maintain delivery of the 95 per cent standard beyond 2020/21.

The Government is committed to improving eating disorder services for adults. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has updated its guidelines, and NHS England recently completed a national review of provision. While NHS England is now considering next steps for the four-week waiting time pilots for adults announced in the NHS Long Term Plan, my colleagues in the Department for Health and Social Care are working to ensure that people are properly supported as they transfer between children's and adults' services. I am pleased that the Government is currently delivering against the standards set for waiting times for eating disorder treatment.

The importance of early intervention to help people with eating disorders cannot be underestimated, which is why I welcome increased funding for children and young people's mental health, in particular, to help to identify people suffering with the mental distress of an



eating disorder. The NHS Long Term Plan, through a £2.3 billion uplift in annual mental health funding, makes a commitment enable an additional 345,000 children and young people aged 0-25 to access support via NHS funded mental health services and school or college-based mental health support teams. Using BMI to identify people with an eating disorder remains a useful tool, but I am pleased that improved access to mental health support will enable earlier intervention for young people.

Eating disorders are an acutely distressing mental illness but with the right approach and appropriate investment, I am confident that the Government will be able to offer help, care and a full recovery to all those who suffer from eating disorders.

Thank you for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY