



Mental Health
Network
NHS Confederation



MENTAL HEALTH POLICY GROUP

The Rt. Hon. Jeremy Hunt MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury

09 March 2023

Dear Chancellor of the Exchequer,

Last November you made a commitment to publish a comprehensive NHS workforce plan including “independently verified forecasts for the number of doctors, nurses and other professionals that will be needed in five, ten and 15-years’ time”.

As the Mental Health Policy Group, we welcomed this commitment. However, every day that we wait for the plan to be published, mental health services continue to be stretched to breaking point.

We are calling on you to publish this plan, backed by adequate investment, as a matter of urgency. It must also afford mental health the same level of attention as it will give to physical health.

Over the past year there have been a record 4.3 million referrals to mental health services, with surges in demand for services to help people with severe mental illness, those who have self-harmed and eating disorders in children.

This comes at a time when the gap between workforce supply and demand is growing significantly. New NHS data shows the numbers of vacancies in the mental health workforce are much higher than in the acute (non-specialist) sector.

Improvements to mental health services are also being hampered by the lack of workforce planning. For example, implementation of proposals to reform the Mental Health Act will require an increased psychiatric and wider mental health workforce to be successful.

Without a robust workforce in place patients will continue to go without the lifesaving care they desperately need.

Yours sincerely,

Andy Bell, Interim Chief Executive, Centre for Mental Health
Sean Duggan, Chief Executive, Mental Health Network
Sarah Hughes, Chief Executive, Mind
Dr Adrian James, President, Royal College of Psychiatrists
Mark Rowland, Chief Executive, Mental Health Foundation
Mark Winstanley, Chief Executive, Rethink Mental Illness

The Mental Health Policy Group are an informal coalition of six national organisations working together to improve mental health, comprised of Centre for Mental Health, the Mental Health Foundation, NHS Confederation Mental Health Network, Mind, Rethink Mental Illness and the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

Together we represent providers, professionals and the hundreds of thousands of people who use mental health services, and advocate for cross-government approaches to improve services and support early intervention and prevention of mental health problems. We regularly meet with ministers, officials and NHS arms-length bodies to constructively engage in the policy making process, offering support and challenge.