

Autism and Mental Health Services

Autism is a condition which affects around 700,000 children and adults. It can also be associated with mental health disorders. I have been a keen supporter of the Government's wish to do more to improve our mental health services.

The Government has made great strides with their Think Autism Strategy, and the accompanying statutory guidance. It sets out best-practice for providing high-quality care, and clarifies that local authorities and CCGs should work together to provide post-diagnostic services for people with autism and co-existing mental health problems.

I am aware that challenges still remain, particularly for young people who can be excluded from accessing mental health services because of their autism.

The Government wants to achieve "parity of esteem" between mental and physical health, in terms of access to services, quality of care and allocation of resources. The Secretary of State has promised that an extra £1.3bn will be invested annually in mental health services by 2021.

With this in mind I have written to the Secretary of State to ask him what can be done to provide autism specific mental health services. I shall post his reply when I receive it.

In the meantime I would ask any constituents who are having difficulties in obtaining services to contact me.