

# [UK statement on Somalia elections](#)

Press release

UK Minister for Africa urges Somali leaders to reach a consensus on the electoral process.



The UK underlines the urgent need for Somali leaders to come together and reach consensus on implementing the electoral process, according to the model agreed on 17 September and the recommendations of the 16 February Baidoa Technical Committee. The UK will not support actions that lead to a partial or parallel electoral process, or an automatic extension of previous mandates. In the interests of the Somali people, and our collective interests in the security, development and growth of Somalia, we call on Somalia's leaders to overcome the deadlock, engage in constructive dialogue and hold inclusive and credible elections as soon as possible.

Published 27 March 2021

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## [Mental health recovery plan backed by £500 million](#)

People with mental health difficulties, ranging from severe mental illnesses such as bipolar and schizophrenia, to those with more common mental health issues, including anxiety and depression, will benefit from expanded mental health services backed by £500 million as part of the government's Mental Health Recovery Action Plan.

The plan, published today, aims to respond to the impact of the pandemic on the mental health of the public, specifically targeting groups which have been most impacted including those with severe mental illness, young people,

and frontline staff.

Under the plan NHS talking therapies (IAPT services) which offer confidential treatment of conditions such as anxiety, depression and PTSD will expand, supporting 1.6 million people to access services in 2021/22, backed by an additional £38 million.

Additional therapists will also be trained to support those with more complex mental health needs as a result of the pandemic.

People living with severe mental illness will also benefit from enhanced mental services in the community, backed by £58 million for better, joined up support between primary and secondary care, including specialist mental health staff embedded in primary care. The funding will accelerate expansion and transformation of community mental health services, enabling people with severe mental illnesses to access psychological therapies, improved physical health care, employment support, personalised and trauma-informed care, medicines management and support for self-harm.

This is part of the wider government agenda to build back better from the pandemic and ensure everyone is able to access the support they need.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

Our Recovery Action Plan, backed by £500 million of funding will accelerate the expansion of mental health services and provide people with the support they need.

As part of our response to this global pandemic we not only want to tackle the public health threat of coronavirus but ensure our clinicians have the resources to deal with the impact on people's mental health.

One-off initiatives will receive funding to tackle the impact of COVID-19 on mental health and learning disability and autism services and to support groups who have disproportionately been affected by the pandemic.

Funding will also be used to help level up mental health and wellbeing across the country in the most deprived local authority areas in England, supporting prevention activities like debt advice, carers support, outreach to people facing loneliness and isolation, youth projects and community groups.

Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Nadine Dorries said

I am acutely aware of the impact the pandemic has had on the mental health and wellbeing of many. The public has shown great resilience during these challenging times, but some groups including young people and those with severe mental illness have been impacted more than others.

This funding will support these groups, both in initiatives specifically designed in the wake of the pandemic, and by enabling us to bring forward our NHS Long Term Plan commitments.

For anyone who is feeling they need support, I urge you to reach out. Our mental health services are here for you.

One-off, new initiatives to support mental health recovery from the pandemic include:

- £15 million to help level up mental health and wellbeing across the country through funding initiatives to promote positive mental health in the most deprived local authority areas in England – eligible local authorities will receive around £500,000 each to fund prevention activities like debt advice, carers support, outreach to people facing loneliness and isolation, youth projects and community groups for those most affected by Covid-19 including minority ethnic communities
- £13 million to ensure young adults aged 18 to 25, including university students, are supported with tailored mental health services, helping bridge the gap between children's and adult services – this funding will ensure services are better able to meet the needs of this group as a result of the pandemic, reducing the likelihood of needing hospital treatment in the future
- £14 million to support the physical health of people living with severe mental illness, through schemes encouraging them to come forward for physical health checks to help spot the signs of conditions like diabetes and heart disease, and get their Covid-19 vaccine
- £17 million to support recovery of the dementia diagnosis rate and tackle the backlog of appointments as a result of the pandemic
- £2.5 million to pilot new approaches to support children who have experienced complex trauma.
- £2.5 million to boost a pilot supporting offenders with significant mental health needs, to divert them away from custodial sentences, and help them to access the support they need through Mental Health Treatment Requirements
- £31 million to support learning disability and autism services, to address the diagnostic backlog as a result of the pandemic, and support intervention to prevent children and young people with learning disability, autism or both escalating into crisis
- £3 million to begin preparations for implementing the Mental Health Act Reform, increasing capacity in the workforce and laying the groundwork for broader reforms including testing ways to improve the quality of care and provide culturally appropriate advocacy
- £5 million to support suicide prevention through voluntary and community sector organisations

The Recovery Action Plan highlights further initiatives to place mental health at the centre of government policy, including through the development and testing of a 'Mental Health Impact Assessment' for all new policies, and continuation of the Ministerial group examining the impacts of the pandemic on mental health and wellbeing. This group has overseen a range of cross-

government initiatives, such as the Wellbeing for Education Return scheme launched last September.

In addition, all government departments are committing to promote Public Health England's Psychological First Aid training to their workers and volunteers to develop their skills and confidence in providing support to those affected by COVID-19. These free online training modules help people develop their skills and confidence in providing key psychological support on issues such as job worries, bereavement or isolation.

NHS England's National Mental Health Director, Claire Murdoch said:

The pandemic has turned everyone's lives upside down and has been really tough on mental health which is why we have ensured NHS services have remained open while also treating tens of thousands of Covid patients.

This funding announced as part of the Spending Review last November will now support the NHS's work to boost capacity of the services we offer, including our world-leading talking therapies, community-based care for people with severe mental illness, and our round the clock crisis lines which were established at the beginning of the pandemic.

Mental health services have remained open during the pandemic, often adapting to provide support via digital services. The Recovery Action Plan commits to capitalise on this transformation of services, including a £30 million commitment from NHSX to support mental health Trusts to embed digital and remote working into service delivery.

To support NHS mental health services in the longer term, £111 million will be invested to train the workforce of the future, which will ensure staff are in place to support two million more people access NHS mental health care and treatment by 2023/24.

Support for frontline workers also remains a key priority, and an additional £10 million will be invested to support the mental health of the workforce in the wake of the pandemic. This is on top of support put in place by NHS England, including a dedicated confidential staff support line operated by the Samaritans, and a £15 million investment to strengthen mental health support for NHS staff during the second wave.

The Recovery Action Plan is published alongside the National Suicide Prevention Strategy Progress Report and associated cross-government workplan, which sets out data and trends on suicide and self-harm, progress against existing commitments, and crucially, the steps government has and will be taking to reduce suicide and self-harm as far as possible.

£79 million of this £500 million for Children and Young People's mental health services was announced earlier this month to expand community mental health services and the provision of [mental health support teams in schools](#).

£87 million to support good-quality discharge from mental health facilities will also be funded from the £500 million and was announced as part of the [£7 billion package for the health and care sector](#).

Those with severe mental illness are prioritised for the COVID-19 vaccine under JCVI cohort 6.

Full allocation of the £500m for Mental Health and NHS workforce announced at the Spending Review:

- funding to accelerate delivery of key mental health commitments the NHS Long Term Plan in 2021/22 (£189m)
- children and young people: Mental Health Support Teams, community support, eating disorder services and crisis and intensive home treatment (£79m)
- adult community support to bring forward the expansion of integrated primary and secondary care for adults and older adults with SMI (£58m)
- crisis support to sustain and enhance operation of 24/7 crisis lines in 2021/22 (£13m)
- IAPT funding (£38m)
- suicide prevention and reduction (£1m)
- dedicated funding to support workforce growth (£111m)
- education and training to grow the mental health workforce, and begin implementing the Mental Health Act Reforms
- action to tackle critical 'backlogs' as a result of the pandemic (£170m)
- complex trauma as a result of violence and Mental health Treatment Requirements (£5m)
- memory assessment services and recovery of the dementia diagnosis rate (£17m)
- support for 18 to 25 year olds transitioning to adult services (£13m)
- funding to support discharge (£87m)
- physical health outreach for those with SMI and remote delivery of checks (£14m)
- preparation work for Mental Health Act reforms (£3m)
- funding for Learning Disabilities and Autism (£31m)
- action to intervene early to prevent mental ill-health and decrease suicide risk, and reduce consequent pressure on NHS services, including in future years (£20m)
- early intervention and prevention (£15m)
- suicide prevention through VCSE sector (£5m)
- funding reserved to adapt and evolve mental health support for workforce where needed (£10m)

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## [PM call with President Biden: 26 March 2021](#)

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to US President Joe Biden this afternoon.



The Prime Minister spoke to President Joe Biden this afternoon.

The leaders discussed the fight against coronavirus and updated each other on their countries' vaccine rollouts. The Prime Minister stressed that global access to vaccines will be key to defeating the pandemic.

The Prime Minister and President agreed that combatting climate change will be a crucial component of building back better from the pandemic. They shared their goals for the President's Climate Change Summit in April and the UK-hosted COP26 Summit in November, including the need to address climate change and preserve biodiversity in tandem. They discussed the importance of ensuring all countries have access to the green technology they need to reduce carbon emissions.

They talked about shared international challenges. The leaders agreed on the need for Iran to come back into compliance with the nuclear deal. On China, the Prime Minister and President reflected on the significant action taken by the UK, US and other international partners earlier this week to impose sanctions on human rights violators in Xinjiang and expressed their concern about retaliatory action taken by China.

On Northern Ireland, the leaders reiterated their shared commitment to protecting the Good Friday Agreement.

The Prime Minister looked forward to welcoming the President to Cornwall for the G7 Summit in June.

Published 26 March 2021

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## **[Letter from Chloe Smith to Association of Electoral Administrators](#)**

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