



HM Treasury, 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ

Caroline Lucas MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

30th April 2018

Your ref: ML.KL.N0031.CM.17.4.18

Dear Caroline,

Thank you for your email of 17 April to Philip Hammond about how the Government's proposed breathing space scheme can support those experiencing mental health crises. I am replying as the minister responsible for this policy area.

I want to start by noting that the Government is strongly committed to implementing a breathing space scheme as quickly, and, most importantly, as effectively as possible. Indeed, I see the creation of this scheme as one of the most important things I will do as a minister.

The Government is currently analysing responses to a Call for Evidence on breathing space, and will consult on a single policy proposal this summer. We will then lay regulations to establish the scheme during 2019.

Regarding your specific concern, as you note, the Government is committed to parity of esteem between physical and mental health. Specifically, we increased spending on mental health to a record £11.6 billion in 2016/17, and made over £300 million available to improve mental health support for children and young people in England.

I agree it will be critical to ensure the scheme is accessible to the most vulnerable in society, who will often be most in need of the support the scheme can offer, and this is especially the case for those experiencing mental health crises.

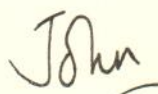
That is why I was pleased to confirm during Report stage of the Financial Guidance and Claims Bill that the Government commits to ensuring that people receiving NHS treatment for a mental health crisis, either at a psychiatric in-patient setting or in the community, will be provided with a suitable alternative mechanism to access the breathing space scheme. The Government will ensure that this mechanism is developed concurrently with the main breathing space scheme.

To further ensure that the scheme is effective for those undergoing mental health crises, I will ensure that the Government works closely with expert stakeholders on this issue as

we develop the design of breathing space. Indeed, my officials have recently met with senior representatives from the Money and Mental Health Policy Institute, and we will continue to engage with the Institute as our policy development progresses.

Thank you for taking the time to make us aware of these concerns.

with very best regards

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "John", with a stylized underline.

JOHN GLEN