



DEBATE PACK

Number CDP 2019/0055, 26 February 2019

Eating Disorders Awareness Week

This pack has been prepared ahead of the debate to be held in Westminster Hall on Wednesday 27 February 2019 from 9.30-11am on Eating Disorders Awareness Week. The debate will be opened by Kirstene Hair MP.

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The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

1. Background

There will be a debate in Westminster Hall on Wednesday 27 February 2019 from 9.30-11am on Eating Disorders Awareness Week. The debate will be opened by Kirstene Hair MP.

Eating disorders are serious mental illnesses that can have severe psychological, physical and social consequences. They typically involve disordered eating behaviour, which might mean restricting food intake, binge-eating, purging, fasting or excessive exercise, or a combination of these behaviours. They are associated with negative perceptions of body image, and while men and women of any age can develop an eating disorder, they most commonly affect young women.

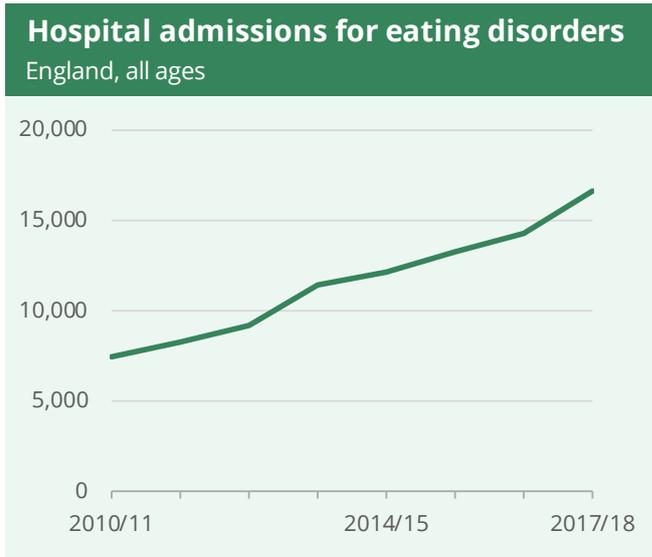
In its 2017 [clinical guideline on eating disorders](#) NICE provides the following background, including estimates of prevalence:

Eating disorders are defined by the negative beliefs and behaviours they cause people to have about themselves and their eating, body shape and weight. They can cause people to adopt restricted eating, binge eating and compensatory behaviours (such as vomiting and excessive exercise). The emotional and physical consequences of these beliefs and behaviours maintain the disorder and result in a high mortality rate from malnutrition, suicide and physical issues (such as electrolyte imbalances). This is most common in people with anorexia nervosa. There are also other physical complications (such as osteoporosis) and psychiatric comorbidities (such as anxiety disorders) that affect the wellbeing and recovery of people with an eating disorder and raise the cost of treatment.

Using figures for UK hospital admissions from 2012 to 2013, the eating disorders charity BEAT estimated that there were over 725,000 people with an eating disorder in the UK, approximately 90% of whom were female. However, recent community-based epidemiological studies suggest that as many as 25% of people with an eating disorder are male. Eating disorders most commonly start in adolescence, but can also start during childhood or adulthood. About 15% of people with an eating disorder have anorexia nervosa, which is also more common in younger people. Most people with an eating disorder meet diagnostic criteria for bulimia nervosa, binge eating disorder, or other specified feeding and eating disorder (OSFED). Each disorder is associated with poor quality of life, social isolation, and a substantial impact for family members and carers. Eating disorders are long-lasting conditions if they are not treated.¹

The number of hospital admissions with a diagnosis related to eating disorders in England has doubled since 2010. In 2017/18 there were 16,547 admissions where an eating disorder was recorded as either a primary or secondary diagnosis. 91% of those admitted were female.

¹ NICE, [Eating disorders: recognition and treatment](#), May 2017



Sources: NHS Digital, Supplementary info files ([2010/11-2016/17](#); [2017/18](#))

A recent major survey of children & young people's mental health in England found that 1.0% of girls aged 11-16 and 1.6% aged 17 to 19 had an eating disorder.² Eating disorders were much less common among boys (peaking at 0.2% among ages 11-16).

NHS England publishes quarterly data on the number of children and young people entering treatment for an eating disorder. The table below shows data since the publication series began in 2016.

In the quarter ending December 2018, the number starting treatment was 30% higher than two years earlier. Over this period, routine cases (+35%) have increased more than urgent cases (+11%). One in six cases are urgent.

Children & young people starting eating disorder treatment

England

Quarter ending	Urgent cases	Routine cases	Total
Jun 2016	239	915	1,154
Sep 2016	226	941	1,167
Dec 2016	302	1,174	1,476
Mar 2017	249	1,197	1,446
Jun 2017	281	1,355	1,636
Sep 2017	286	1,333	1,619
Dec 2017	307	1,489	1,796
Mar 2018	266	1,550	1,816
Jun 2018	293	1,530	1,823
Sep 2018	246	1,453	1,699
Dec 2018	336	1,585	1,921

Source: NHS England, [Children and Young People Eating Disorders Waiting Times](#)

² NHS Digital, [Mental Health of Children and Young People, 2017](#)

For further information on eating disorders, see the following sources:

- NHS, [Eating disorders](#), January 2018
- Beat, [Types of eating disorders](#)
- Mind, [Eating problems](#)

2. Eating Disorder Awareness Week

The theme of Eating Disorder Awareness Week 2019 (EADW) on 25 February to 3 March is '[Breaking down barriers](#).' The eating disorder charity, [Beat](#), reports that it is aiming to tackle the stereotypes associated with eating disorders and ensure that people can access effective treatment. It encourages people to join the campaign to show that eating disorders "do not discriminate, and that everyone who gets one deserves fast, high-quality treatment." Beat provides further information about stereotypes and a recent survey on the perceptions of eating disorders:

Stereotypes would have you believe that eating disorders are not serious illnesses and they always take the same form, that only white middle-class women and girls suffer. These stereotypes are dangerous, they discourage people from seeking help, make it less likely for employers and, in some cases, healthcare professionals to take them seriously and also it makes them harder to be spotted by the sufferer or a loved one.

We commissioned a YouGov poll to find out more about perceptions of eating disorders, this is what it found:

1. 39% of adults in the UK mistakenly believe eating disorders more commonly affect white people.
2. Six out of ten UK adults mistakenly believe eating disorders mainly affect young people.
3. 37% of lesbian, gay and bisexual people say they would not feel confident seeking help about eating disorders from healthcare professionals compared to 24% of straight people.
4. Only 52% of people from minority ethnicities would feel confident asking for help about eating disorders from healthcare professionals - compared to 64% of white British people.

By their nature, eating disorders are secretive and stigmatised. We know how hard it can be to ask for treatment and it is even harder if a person doesn't meet the expectations of what a person with an eating disorder 'should' look like. This is wrong. It has to change.

Together, we need to break down barriers, help people to understand that they are deserving of help and support no matter their eating disorder diagnosis, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, age or background.³

³ Beat, [Eating disorders can affect anyone. No question](#). [accessed 26 February 2019]

Increasing awareness of eating disorders

In November 2017, Beat reported on the outcome of research into why people with eating disorders delayed seeking help, and the length of time they wait to start treatment. Their report, [Delaying for years, denied for months](#), called on the Government and the NHS to extend their focus on early intervention and ensure attention and resources are applied to reducing the delay between onset of an eating disorder and the individual seeking help. Beat recommended introducing measures to increase awareness of the early signs and symptoms of eating disorders, and initiatives that support and encourage individuals to seek professional help as soon as they suspect they have an eating disorder.

Both Beat and the Health Service Ombudsman have also recommended measures to increase awareness of eating disorders among healthcare staff, and to support early diagnosis. In particular, both organisations have called for increased eating disorder training at medical schools.⁴

In response to a December 2018 [Parliamentary Question about raising awareness of eating disorders](#) and encouraging those affected to seek help from their GP, the Under Secretary of State for Health and Social care, Jackie Doyle-Price, set out information about the Government's Time to Change mental health anti-stigma campaign:

This Government recognises the importance of raising awareness and reducing stigma so that more people feel able to talk about their mental health, including eating disorders, and seek treatment. In January 2017, the Prime Minister committed to having mental health first aid training available to secondary schools, aiming to have trained at least one teacher in every secondary school by 2020 and to all primary schools by 2022.

This Government has also provided grant funding to the Time to Change national mental health anti-stigma campaign since 2012. Time to Change works with people with experience of mental health problems, including eating disorders, to challenge stigma and to improve social attitudes towards mental health. Time to Change's website provides information and guidance about eating disorders and provides signposts and links to organisations that can help. This information is available at the following link:

<https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/about-mental-health/types-problems/eating-disorders>

The Government has also committed to equip one million people to be better informed to look after their own mental health, so Public Health England is currently leading the development of a £15 million national mental health campaign called 'Every Mind Matters'.⁵

3. Government policy and NHS guidance

The joint Department of Health and Social Care and Department for Education Green Paper, [Transforming children and young people's](#)

⁴ Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, [Ignoring the alarms: How NHS eating disorder services are failing patients](#), December 2017

⁵ [Written question – 199793 \[Eating disorders\]](#) 13 December 2018

[mental health provision](#) (December 2017), included several proposals to improve support for mental health in schools, and to improve links between schools and the NHS. [The Government's response to the Green Paper consultation](#) was published in July 2018 and set out next steps around implementation. A new [national waiting times standard](#) for children and young people with an eating disorder came into force in April 2017. The target is that, by 2020, 95% of young people in need of an eating disorders service will be seen within four weeks, and within one week in urgent cases. No similar waiting time standard is in place for adult eating disorder services but the NHS Long Term Plan (January 2019) committed to test four-week waiting times for adult and older adult community mental health teams, with selected local areas.⁶

In January 2017, the Prime Minister also announced that every secondary school in England will be offered mental health first aid training. The programme, to be rolled out to cover every secondary school in England over three years, will see teachers receive practical advice on how to deal with a range of mental health issues, including eating disorders. Further background can be found on policy in this area can be found in the Library briefing paper on [Children and young people's mental health – policy, CAMHS services, funding and education](#) (January 2019).

NICE published an updated guideline on the recognition and treatment of eating disorders ([NG69](#)) in May 2017. This guideline covers identifying, assessing, diagnosing, treating and managing eating disorders in people of all ages. It makes recommendations for different stages of the care process on identifying eating disorders, ensuring patient safety, supporting people with an eating disorder and their family members and carers, and ensuring people have access to evidence-based care. Given the high level of physical complications and psychological comorbidities, recommendations on care cover both physical care and psychological interventions. The guideline applies to all settings in which NHS care is provided, and to settings in which eating disorders might be identified. NICE have produced a new Quality Standard on eating disorder services ([QS175](#), September 2018). Beat and other campaigning on eating disorders have called for GPs to be well-informed of the NICE guideline and the early symptoms of eating disorders so that they are able to refer without delay.⁷

Chapter 3 of the [NHS Long Term Plan](#) (January 2019) sets the NHS's priorities for care quality and outcomes improvements for the decade ahead.⁸ On adult mental health services the plan committed NHS England to providing an additional 380,000 people per year with access to adult psychological therapies by 2023/24. It also stated, by 2023/24, the NHS 111 service would act as a single point of contact for NHS services for people experiencing mental health crisis. It also included plans for new services intended to support patients going through a

⁶ [NHS England, NHS Long Term Plan, 7 January 2019](#), para 3.92

⁷ See Beat, [Delaying for years, denied for months](#), November 2017

⁸ Further information can be found in Chapter 3 of the Plan, from page 50 (children's mental health) and page 68 (adult mental health) of the [NHS Long Term Plan](#).

mental health crisis would be introduced. On young people's mental health NHS England committed that it would increase the number of children and young people with mental health problems receiving mental health services by 70,000 by 2020/21, and that funding for these services would grow faster than the overall NHS funding and total mental health spending. The NHS Long Term Plan also included a specific commitment to increased investment in eating disorder services for young people, and to maintain waiting time standards:

3.26. Over the next five years, we will also boost 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 us to maintain delivery of the 95% standard beyond 2020/21.⁹

Responding to the NHS Long Term Plan Beat's Chief Executive Andrew Radford said:

We welcome the announcement of extra investment for children and young people's eating disorder services beyond 2021. The progress that has been made on reducing waiting times for children and young people with these devastating illnesses must be maintained and the extra investment should address the postcode lottery that currently still exists. In order to achieve this it is vital that the money goes to frontline services where it most needed.

It is also encouraging to see the ambition to improve services for young adults and end the arbitrary transition from children's to adult mental health services based on age rather than what is best for the sufferer.

Measures to support adults with eating disorders are desperately needed and [waiting times and introducing access targets in line with those for children would be a step in the right direction](#), with the necessary funding to make them achievable, must happen urgently.

Waiting times standards help sufferers who have already been referred for treatment but it still takes nearly three years, on average, for someone to realise they have an eating disorder and visit a GP. We know that the sooner someone gets treatment, the better their chances of recovery, so the Government must do more to support people to seek help fast.¹⁰

As part of the Scottish Government's Mental Health Strategy, the NHS in Scotland has received funding to develop an online peer support tool, which allows young people to pair with a trained volunteer who has recovered from an eating disorder. Launched in February 2018, this is alongside a new website, the [CarED platform](#), that hosts video tutorials and links for parents and carers, and a database of services across Scotland.¹¹ On 25 February 2019, the Scottish Government announced that the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) were

⁹ [NHS England, NHS Long Term Plan, 7 January 2019](#)

¹⁰ [Beat press release, New NHS plan boosts young people's services but adults need more support, 8 January 2019](#)

¹¹ [Scottish Government, Online support for eating disorders, 28 February 2018](#)

working to produce new guidance for healthcare professionals on the treatment and care of people with eating disorders in Scotland.¹²

The Welsh Government has commissioned a review of *Eating Disorders – A Framework for Wales*, first published in 2009. This follows the publication of NICE guidance in 2017, and advice from Public Health Wales on revisions to update the framework in 2016.¹³ On 8 January 2019 the Welsh Health Minister Vaughan Gething announced an [additional £7 million of investment for children and young people’s mental health](#).

Information on eating disorder services in Northern Ireland can be found on the [NI Direct website](#).

¹² Scottish Government, [Support for people with eating disorders](#), 25 February 2019

¹³ Beat website, [Review of NHS Eating Disorders treatment in Wales underway](#), April 2018; see also [Welsh Government, 24 August 2016](#)

4. News items

Independent

Eating disorder stereotypes prevent LGBT+, Bame, older and low-income people from getting correct support

25 February 2019

<https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/eating-disorders-stereotypes-lgbt-bame-low-income-older-support-help-a8791796.html>

BBC News Scotland

New plan to treat eating disorders

25 February 2019

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-47349483?intlink_from_url=https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/topics/cq23pdgvryrt/eating-disorders&link_location=live-reporting-story

Guardian

Hospital admissions for eating disorders surge to highest in eight years

15 February 2019

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/feb/15/hospital-admissions-for-eating-disorders-surge-to-highest-in-eight-years>

Guardian

Instagram urged to crack down on eating disorder images

8 February 2019

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2019/feb/08/instagram-urged-to-crack-down-on-eating-disorder-images>

Telegraph

Number of boys with eating disorders doubles

25 November 2018

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/11/23/number-boys-eating-disorders-doubles/>

BBC News Online

Women told they aren't thin enough for eating disorder treatment, MPs told

16 October 2018

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-45881914>

5. Press releases

Beat Eating Disorders

New research shows eating disorder stereotypes prevent people finding help

25 February 2019

Stereotypes about who gets an eating disorder are preventing BAME, LGBT+ and people from less affluent backgrounds from seeking and getting medical treatment, according to research published today for Eating Disorders Awareness Week by the UK's eating disorder charity Beat. The charity says this delay could make it harder for individuals from these groups to recover.

A YouGov poll commissioned by Beat found that nearly 4 in 10 (39%) of people believed eating disorders were more common amongst white people than other ethnicities. Yet clinical research has found that the illnesses are just as common or even more common among BAME people than white people.

This widespread misconception means that eating disorders among BAME people often go unrecognised. Ballari, 25, suffered from anorexia and bulimia and said that her mixed race South Asian ethnicity played a large role in her illness. She said

My father spent a lot of time learning you do not need to be a white, privileged teenage girl to have an eating disorder.

Ballari added

the harsh reality is eating disorders do not discriminate.

Beat's research found that BAME people feel less confident in seeking help from a health professional for an eating disorder than white people, with just over half (52%) of BAME respondents saying they would feel confident doing so compared to almost two-thirds (64%) of white British* respondents.

Priyesh, who suffered from bulimia, said he faced

two strong stereotypes: that being male and from a BAME background, I would not be affected by an eating disorder. People like myself are not confident in seeking help for eating disorders because this is something not talked about in our communities.

Priyesh added,

We should be encouraging everyone regardless of race or gender to feel comfortable in seeking help should they need it and speak openly.

Similarly, Beat's research found that nearly 30% of respondents believed less affluent people were less likely to develop eating disorders than affluent people, when in fact eating disorders occur at similar rates across all levels of income and education. Kate, 22, said that in her

working class background “there was an element of disbelief” about her eating disorder.

Someone like me shouldn't have an eating disorder, because it wasn't common in such an environment. It wasn't something I felt my school had had to deal with before so aside from a therapist I saw once a week or fortnight there was no support put in place to keep me on track or even to help my family.

While LGBT+ people are at significantly higher risk of eating disorders, Beat's research found that 37% of lesbian, gay or bisexual respondents said they would not feel confident seeking help, compared to 24% of straight people. Andy, 37, said that when he tried to explain the fact that he had binge eating disorder, he found people

thought gay men were all muscle or thin. I wanted people to understand, but they didn't take my illness seriously. It took years to explain that I wasn't just greedy and my problems were emotional.

More adults suffer from eating disorders than young people but with 60% of respondents to Beat's survey saying they believed the illnesses predominantly affect young people, older sufferers often go unnoticed. Lee, 44, has struggled with bulimia and other mental health issues since her twenties. Now, she says she can

go out for a meal with my family, but other days are still so hard. I am with a new partner and she is very supportive, but most folks don't get it. There's definitely a stereotype, that it's young women who get eating disorders, when anyone, of any age or gender, and from any walk of life can get one.

During Eating Disorder Awareness Week, Beat is campaigning against stereotypes and is highlighting the stories of those who are not normally associated with eating disorders. Beat's Chief Executive Andrew Radford said

It is sadly not surprising that stereotypes about who gets an eating disorder are so widespread, but it is very worrying that those misconceptions are preventing people from seeking help. This means that BAME, LGBT and poorer people will get iller before they start treatment and find their recovery is harder.

Eating disorders are serious mental illnesses that affect people of all ages, genders, and backgrounds. We have to challenge the stereotypes and raise awareness so that everyone who needs help can get it quickly.

Scottish Government

Support for people with eating disorders

25 February 2019

New guidelines for clinicians in Scotland.

Doctors in Scotland are to be given new guidelines to support the treatment and care of patients with eating disorders.

Produced by the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) the guidance will focus on the unique cultural and geographical make up of Scotland, which includes remote and rural parts of the country where there may be not be specialist treatment. It will also give clinicians more advice on supporting patients with medical complications associated with anorexia nervosa.

In 2017/18, 536 people across Scotland were treated for an eating disorder diagnosis and the guidance will also include a version for patients and carers.

The announcement marks the start of Eating Disorders Awareness Week 2019, a campaign organised by national eating disorders charity Beat. The theme for this year's week is tackling discrimination, and breaking down the stereotypes associated with eating disorders.

Clare Haughey, Minister for Mental Health said:

It is vital that patients across Scotland have the best possible support available and I welcome the eating disorder guidance SIGN is creating which will give clinicians in Scotland more specific advice.

Our ambitious 10 year Mental Health Strategy, backed by investment of £150 million over the next five years, sets out clearly how we can improve early intervention, and ensure better access to services, including specific actions to support people with eating disorders

Eating disorders do not discriminate - anyone can be affected by them and we are committed to raising awareness across Scotland.

Sara Twaddle, Director of Evidence with Healthcare Improvement Scotland, of which SIGN is a part, said:

Studies tell us that eating disorders in teenage girls may be as high as 12% and that male eating disorders are increasingly being recognised.

Moreover, professional and public bodies representing people with eating disorders tell us that there's a need for a guideline on diagnosis and treatment that is specific to the needs of Scotland.

The guideline will be for healthcare professionals, and there will be a version for patients and carers also. We believe that the guidelines will support access to CAMHS services and will complement the work Healthcare Improvement Scotland is providing to support this. Our intention is that the guideline improves the care that people receive, and improves service provision and outcomes across all of Scotland.

Background

The new Scotland specific guidance will also include the Royal College of Psychiatrists' Management of Really Sick Patients with Anorexia Nervosa (MARSIPAN) Guidelines which focus on the medical complications associated with anorexia nervosa and associated management.

[The Scottish Government's approach to mental health from 2017 to 2027 – a 10 year vision.](#)

Health boards will use this publication alongside the existing [NICE guidelines](#)

[Beat](#) is the UK's eating disorder charity and the first national charity for people with eating disorders.

Beat Eating Disorders

Harmful eating disorder content should be removed from social media

8 February 2019

Following Instagram's promise that it would remove all content related to self-harm from its platform, the UK's eating disorder charity Beat has called for similar action on content causing harm to people with eating disorders.

Beat's Director of External Affairs Tom Quinn said:

So-called pro-ana and pro-mia content is widespread on social media and can be very harmful for people suffering from an eating disorder. People will not develop an eating disorder by being exposed to images that glamorise eating disorders, but research shows that such content helps perpetuate the illnesses for people who are already suffering.

We welcome Instagram's recent increases in its security measures to protect users from content that promotes eating disorders. However, social media platforms should do more to ensure such content cannot be posted in the same way as Instagram is now cracking down on images of self-harm.

It is important to note that most pro-ana and pro-mia content is posted by people who are themselves suffering from an eating disorder and is not deliberately malicious. Social media platforms should do more to direct affected users to sources of support.

While people can develop an eating disorder at any point in life, we know that teenagers are particularly affected by anorexia, and we urge companies and individuals who market to this age group to consider the implications of their marketing for vulnerable people.

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

NICE responds to feedback on eating disorders quality initiatives

21 September 2018

A new NICE quality standard (QS) on eating disorders focuses on promoting early access and coordinating care between services.

NICE has made several additions to the standard since a draft was published earlier in the year, in response to feedback from stakeholders, including a parliamentary report.

In recent years, waiting times have improved for children and young people, with more than 80% now starting treatment within 4 weeks of referral. This is an increase from less than 65% before 2016 and the ambition is that by 2020/21 this will increase to 95%.

Assessment aim

During the NICE consultation period, access to treatments was highlighted as an area for improvement. The new addition to the standard recommends children with eating disorders are assessed and treated within 4 weeks, and adults are seen as soon as possible, within a locally agreed timeframe.

Dr Dasha Nicholls, Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist says:

Eating disorders can be absolutely devastating for people and their families. If left without clinical attention, a person's condition has a tendency to become worse and harder to treat.

We know people with eating disorders have better recovery rates when they receive early treatment and it is essential to have prompt assessment and referral schemes in place to help people get seen quickly.

We are very excited to include a statement in the NICE quality standard emphasising this need to get children and adults seen by specialists as soon as possible and to recommend a suitable timeframe.

Coordination push

In addition, NICE also accepted the recommendations of a [Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman report](#), that greater emphasis be put on the need to coordinate care across different services.

People with eating disorders often have additional mental health problems, for example anxiety or depression, and may be in contact with several health specialists.

Communication between these sectors is crucial to ensure people with eating disorders are fully supported. This should include a detailed care plan explaining how the services will work together, NICE says.

Moving between services may also cause miscommunication about a person's care and people must have their risks assessed during these transitions.

Professor Gillian Leng, deputy chief executive at NICE said:

We are committed to ensuring our guidance meets the needs of those who are affected by eating disorders and are pleased to have had the opportunity to respond to issues raised during consultation.

By highlighting these areas for improvement, we hope that more people with eating disorders receive the best care, as soon as possible.

Beat Eating Disorders

Shorter eating disorder waiting times must also see improved access to services

9 August 2018

NHS England today released [waiting time statistics for children and young people](#) referred for treatment for eating disorders, showing that the proportion of routine cases being seen within the target of four weeks has risen from 79.9% to 81.2% on the previous quarter, while the number of urgent cases being seen within targets has fallen from 78.9% to 74.7%.

Reacting to the figures, the UK eating disorder charity Beat's Chief Executive Andrew Radford said,

We welcome the indication that waiting times are getting shorter and that, nationally, services appear to be on track to meet targets for routine referrals by 2021.

But there is still a postcode lottery when it comes to how long children and young people wait for treatment. While this is partly because some services are new and are still developing, the NHS must do more to ensure all local services have the resources to provide evidence-based treatment fast.

The Government has allocated an additional £30 million per year to meeting waiting times targets, which is very welcome, but not all of this money is going where it is meant to. The funding should go to the frontline services where it is needed.

These waiting times standards only apply to children and young people in England, but adults have to wait longer than young people at every stage before receiving treatment and the Government must introduce waiting times standards for adults, too.

Waiting times standards help sufferers who have already been referred for treatment but it still takes nearly three years, on average, for someone to realise they have an eating disorder and visit a GP. We know that the sooner someone gets treatment, the better their chances of recovery, so the Government must do more to ensure people are able to seek help fast.

Notes to editors

- Beat spokespeople are available for interviews and comment.
- The [figures published today](#) show the length of time between referral and start of treatment for children and young people with an eating disorder in England. NHS England itself warns that the data is incomplete should be treated with caution.
- NHS England [publishes a guide](#) to the figures specifically for press.
- The figures show local variation. Services in the South-east and South-west saw under 70% of urgent patients within the target of 1 week, compared to over 70% or 80% for other regions. The proportion of routine cases within the 4 week target in the

South-East and South-West were below 80% compared to over 80% for other regions.

- NHS England guidance for Clinical Commissioning Groups stresses the importance of self-referral for children and young people with an eating disorder, but some services are still not accepting self-referrals. Beat urges the NHS to ensure self-referral for eating disorders is an option for all, as soon as possible.
- [Research published by Beat](#) in November showed that on average it takes three and half years for someone to get treatment for an eating disorder after first falling ill. By far the longest delay is the time it takes for someone to realise they are ill and then to seek help.
- Beat's [media guidelines](#) are designed to help journalists report on eating disorders in an accurate and sensitive manner.
- Beat is the UK's eating disorder charity. More information at: <https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/>

6. Parliamentary material

Debates

Lords questions Mental Health: Eating Disorders

25 February 2019 | Volume 796 c9-

<http://bit.ly/2VIPHHw>

Lords question for short debate: [Mental Health: Children and Young People](#)

on what assessment they have made of the recent concerns expressed by general practitioners that children and young people with mental health problems are unable to access National Health Service treatments; and what steps they will take to address them.

HL Deb 30 January 2019 | Vol 795 cc157-1131

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2019-01-30/debates/E1E11D51-4A9F-4B40-8E65-6D680645B80A/MentalHealthChildrenAndYoungPeople#contribution-ADA4313D-5E39-400F-8142-24A5B3F63010>

Commons Debate: Mental Health and Wellbeing in Schools

HC Deb 04 December 2018 | Volume 650 c296WH-

<http://bit.ly/2EORyME>

Commons debate: Eating Disorders

HC Deb 16 October 2018 | Volume 647 c229WH-

<http://bit.ly/2OvuQT9>

PQs

[Mental Health Provision](#)

Asked by: Paula Sherriff

Last week, The Guardian revealed that hospital admissions for eating disorders have surged in the last year. Meanwhile, the number of children and young people with urgent cases of eating disorders who are treated within a week has fallen, and the number of those waiting between one and four weeks has risen. If prevention is better than cure, why do so many children and adolescents with eating disorders end up in A&E?

Answered by: Jackie Doyle-Price | Department: Health and Social Care

The hon. Lady is right in the sense that we have waiting targets for eating disorders, whereby the most acute cases should be seen within a week. We have seen very good progress—indeed, in most areas those targets are met. I will look into the cases that she has highlighted because we need to give attention to where the targets start to be missed. However, I assure her that we recognise that tackling eating disorders among our youngest people through early intervention must be done because prevention is always better than cure.

HC Deb 19 February 2019 | Vol 654 c1313[*Eating Disorders: Males*](#)**Asked by: Lord Lingfield**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to increase the provision of eating disorder services for males in England.

Answering member: Baroness Manzoor | Department: Department of Health and Social Care

NHS England's Long Term Plan, published on 7 January, confirms that mental health will receive a growing share of the National Health Service budget, worth at least a further £2.3 billion a year in real terms by 2023/24.

More details will be refined in consultation with stakeholders prior to publication of the detailed implementation plan noted in the Long Term Plan.

NHS England has recently completed a national review of adult eating disorder services. Data collected is being reviewed with stakeholders to inform NHS England's understanding what is needed in these services. NHS England commissions inpatient services for both males and females and community services are expected to treat all in need of treatment for an eating disorder regardless of their gender.

HL Deb 28 January 2019 | PQ HL12798[*Eating Disorders*](#)**Asked by: Siddiq, Tulip**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to paragraph 3.92 of the NHS Long Term Plan, whether four-week waiting time targets for community mental health teams will include services for adults with eating disorders.

Answering member: Jackie Doyle-Price | Department: Department of Health and Social Care

The NHS Long Term Plan commits to “test four-week waiting times for adult and older adult community mental health teams, with selected local areas”.

This will form part of wider testing of new and integrated models of primary and community mental health care, as set out in the Long Term Plan.

Testing will inform the development and establishment of future standards, and will consider the most clinically appropriate clock start and clock stop points, interventions and responsible professionals. This will take into account access, quality of care, patient experience and outcomes.

The National Health Service will then set clear standards for patients requiring access to community mental health treatment and roll them out across the NHS over the next decade.

HC Deb 24 January 2019 | PQ 209853

[*Eating Disorders*](#)

Asked by: Lamb, Norman

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to implement the recommendation from the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsmen's December 2017 report entitled Ignoring the alarms: How NHS eating disorder services are failing patients that his Department and NHS England should review the existing quality and availability of adult eating disorder services to achieve parity with child and adolescent services.

Answering member: Jackie Doyle-Price | Department: Department of Health and Social Care

In response to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman report, NHS England has convened a working group with NHS Improvement, Health Education England, the Department and other partners to co-ordinate the actions being taken in response to the recommendations. These actions will inform future planning for improvements to adult eating disorder services.

NHS England commissioned NHS Benchmarking to collect data on the current levels of provision across community and inpatient services for adults with an eating disorder. This work reported to NHS England in 2018 and a modelling exercise has taken place to establish the baseline, understand the geographical variation, and the cost and workforce required to achieve parity with children and young people's eating disorder services.

HC Deb 16 January 2019 | PQ 205840

[*Eating Disorders*](#)

Asked by: Siddiq, Tulip

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average waiting time between GP referral and the start of NHS treatment is for adults with eating disorders.

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce waiting times between referral and the start of treatment for adults with eating disorders.

Answering member: Jackie Doyle-Price | Department: Department of Health and Social Care

The average waiting time between general practitioner referral and the start of National Health Service treatment for adults with eating disorders is not collected.

NHS England has recently completed a national review of adult eating disorder services. Data collected is being reviewed with stakeholders to inform NHS England's understanding of the finance and workforce gaps in these services.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence published its updated clinical guideline for the recognition and treatment of eating disorder for people over the age of eight, including adults, in May 2017. The guidelines specify that if an eating disorder is suspected following initial assessment, the individual should be referred immediately to a community-based, age-appropriate eating disorder service for further assessment or treatment.

HC Deb 10 January 2019 | PQ 203954; PQ 203953

[Eating Disorders](#)

Asked by: Lamb, Norman

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps NHS England is taking to (a) raise public awareness of the symptoms of eating disorders and (b) encourage people that may have an eating disorder to seek help from a GP.

Answering member: Jackie Doyle-Price | Department: Department of Health and Social Care

This Government recognises the importance of raising awareness and reducing stigma so that more people feel able to talk about their mental health, including eating disorders, and seek treatment. In January 2017, the Prime Minister committed to having mental health first aid training available to secondary schools, aiming to have trained at least one teacher in every secondary school by 2020 and to all primary schools by 2022.

This Government has also provided grant funding to the Time to Change national mental health anti-stigma campaign since 2012. Time to Change works with people with experience of mental health problems, including eating disorders, to challenge stigma and to improve social attitudes towards mental health. Time to Change's website provides information and guidance about eating disorders and

provides signposts and links to organisations that can help. This information is available at the following link:

<https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/about-mental-health/types-problems/eating-disorders>

The Government has also committed to equip one million people to be better informed to look after their own mental health, so Public Health England is currently leading the development of a £15 million national mental health campaign called 'Every Mind Matters'.

HC Deb 13 December 2018 | PQ 199793

[Eating Disorders](#)

Asked by: Berger, Luciana

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 29 October 2018 to Question 183515 on Eating Disorders, whether his Department is taking steps to seek to ensure that there is an increase in the number of training tours undertaken on eating disorders under the medical school curricula.

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 29 October 2018 to Question 183515 on Eating Disorders, what measures Health Education England is requesting in the General Medical Council training review to improve eating disorders training among doctors.

Answering member: Stephen Hammond | Department of Health and Social Care

Health Education England (HEE) is working closely with NHS England to better understand the current provision of eating disorder services and identify interventions to increase education and training in eating disorders. It is also the role of National Health Service trusts as employers to ensure they have sufficient staff with the right skills to care for their patients.

Subject to the outcome of this work, HEE would seek to influence the General Medical Council, medical schools and Royal Colleges in discharging their responsibilities for curricula or post registration training and qualifications in ensuring the NHS has available the workforce the NHS requires. HEE takes account of prevalence and proportionality to the prevalence of diseases when planning its approach to these bodies with regard to the focus on specific conditions.

HC Deb 12 December 2018 | PQ 200116; PQ 200115

[Eating Disorders](#)

Asked by: Evans, Chris

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report, Ignoring the alarms: How NHS eating disorder services are failing patients, published by the Parliamentary and Health Service

Ombudsman in December 2018, what steps his Department is taking to review the existing (a) quality and (b) availability of adult eating disorder services to achieve parity with child and adolescent services.

Answering member: Jackie Doyle-Price | Department: Department of Health and Social Care

NHS England commissioned a national review of adult eating disorder services in 2017, which is now complete. Data collected on activity, investment and workforce is being reviewed with stakeholders to inform NHS England's understanding of current provision and existing levels of parity with eating disorder services for children and young people. The data is informing modelling to understand the finance and workforce gaps to achieving greater levels of parity.

Diagnosing and treating eating disorders is an important area of medical practice. It is included within the curriculum for training all doctors, including for general practitioner (where most eating disorders initially present) and in more depth within training for psychiatry, particularly child and adolescent psychiatrists. This training equips doctors to identify the early potential symptoms of an eating disorder and help patients to discuss difficult issues.

This Government recognises the importance of raising awareness and reducing stigma so that more people feel able to talk about their mental health, including eating disorders, and seek treatment. That is why in January 2017, the Prime Minister committed to having mental health first aid training available to secondary schools, aiming to have trained at least one teacher in every secondary school by 2020 and to all primary schools by 2022. This Government has also provided grant funding to the Time to Change national mental health anti-stigma campaign since 2012. Time to Change works with people with experience of mental health problems, including eating disorders, to challenge stigma and to improve social attitudes towards mental health.

The Government has also committed to equip one million people to be better informed to look after their own mental health, so Public Health England is currently leading the development of a £15 million national mental health campaign called 'Every Mind Matters'.

HC Deb 12 December 2018 | PQ 198822

[Eating Disorders](#)

Asked by: Lamb, Norman

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when NHS England plans to publish the outcome of its review of adult eating disorder services.

Answering member: Jackie Doyle-Price | Department: Department of Health and Social Care

The national review of adult eating disorder services that NHS England commissioned in 2017 is now complete.

Data collected on activity, investment and workforce is being reviewed with stakeholders to inform NHS England's understanding of current provision and existing levels of parity with eating disorder services for children and young people. The data is informing modelling in support of the development of the National Health Service's long term plan, which will be launched soon.

Any plans for publication of the NHS benchmarking data will be determined in due course.

HC Deb 10 December 2018 | PQ 197605

[*Eating Disorders*](#)

Asked by: Baroness Parminter

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following the recommendations of the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, what steps they are taking to ensure that information about the (1) number, and (2) duration of training posts in eating disorders for Foundation grade doctors is collected and scrutinised at the national level by Health Education England; and whether this will include how such junior doctors are taught and assessed against a relevant part of their nutrition curriculum.

Answering member: Lord O'Shaughnessy | Department: Department of Health and Social Care

In response to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman report, NHS England has convened a working group with NHS Improvement, Health Education England (HEE), the Department and other partners to co-ordinate actions being taken in response to the recommendations, taking them into account in planning for improvements to adult eating disorder services.

Foundation training covers core generic skills which will include nutrition and all its facets, one of which is eating disorders. Currently, around 47% of foundation programmes in England offer four-month posts in psychiatry, and management of eating disorders and associated conditions is included in the curriculum and learning objectives for such posts.

The Foundation Programme ensures that newly qualified doctors demonstrate their ability to learn in the workplace, develop their clinical and professional skills in the workplace in readiness for core, specialty or general practice training.

Increasing psychiatry posts and training opportunities in foundation is part of HEE's current review of the Foundation Programme. There are quality management systems in place to monitor HEE's performance against those objectives.

HL Deb 27 November 2018 | PQ HL11475

[*Eating Disorders*](#)

Asked by: Berger, Luciana

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 29 October 2018 to Question 183515 on Eating Disorders, what his assessment is of the finding of the research conducted by the vice chair of the Royal College of Psychiatrists' Eating Disorders Faculty, published by the Post Graduate Medical Journal in April 2018, that 20 per cent of medical schools do not include any training on eating disorders.

Answering member: Stephen Hammond | Department: Department of Health and Social Care

The General Medical Council (GMC) set standards for medical education. The GMC are clear that all doctors should have a good understanding of a wide range of mental and physical health conditions, including those related to nutrition and eating disorders. The outcome requirements set by the GMC for all stages of United Kingdom medical education and training require medical students and doctors in training to be able to identify and act where adults and children are vulnerable. These outcomes have recently been revised and include more emphasis on mental health and nutrition.

HC Deb 19 November 2018 | PQ191395[Eating Disorders](#)**Asked by: Dodds, Anneliese**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has undertaken a baseline audit of levels of (a) investment, (b) capacity and (c) in (i) inpatient and (ii) community services for adults with eating disorders.

Answering member: Jackie Doyle-Price | Department: Department of Health and Social Care

In 2017/18, NHS England commissioned NHS Benchmarking to collect data on current levels of provision for adults with an eating disorder across community and inpatient services for adults with an eating disorder including levels of investment, mapping of services, quantifying the workforce, understanding waiting times and distances travelled for inpatient care. The outputs were reported to NHS England in 2018, and are being used by NHS England to assess levels of geographical variation, and to model the cost and workforce implications of any future commitments to service improvements.

HC Deb 15 November 2018 | PQ 190565[Eating Disorders](#)**Asked by: Berger, Luciana**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government plans to accept all of the recommendations in the

independent Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman report, Ignoring the alarms: how NHS eating disorder services are failing patients.

Answering member: Jackie Doyle-Price | Department: Department of Health and Social Care

The Government takes seriously the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman report 'Ignoring the alarms: how NHS eating disorder services are failing patients'.

In response to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman report, NHS England has convened a working group with NHS Improvement, Health Education England, the Department and other partners to co-ordinate actions being taken in response to the recommendations, taking them into account in planning for improvements to adult eating disorder services. The national clinical director for mental health at NHS England, Professor Tim Kendall, is chairing this working group and progress will be reported to the NHS England Board.

HC Deb 12 November 2018 | PQ 188213

[Eating Disorders](#)

Asked by: Berger, Luciana

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase the number of training hours that medicine students undertake on eating disorders.

Answering member: Stephen Barclay | Department: Department of Health and Social Care

Diagnosing and treating eating disorders is an important area of medical practice. It is included within the curriculum for training all doctors, including for general practitioners (where most eating disorders initially present) and in more depth within training for psychiatry, particularly child and adolescent psychiatrists.

Each individual medical school sets its own undergraduate medical curriculum. These have to meet the standards set by the General Medical Council (GMC), who then are responsible for approving curriculum against those standards.

The curricula for postgraduate specialty training is set by individual royal colleges to standards set by the GMC. The curricula for specialty training is currently being reviewed by the GMC and Health Education England (HEE) and their counterparts in the devolved administrations, which is expected to be completed by 2020/21. HEE is actively influencing the review to meet the requirements of the National Health Service

HC Deb 29 October 2018 | PQ 183515

[Eating Disorders](#)

Asked by: Cunningham, Mr Jim

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the treatment options for people suffering with eating disorders and subsequent mental health conditions but who are denied treatment due to weighing more than the required benchmark for diagnosis.

Answering member: Matt Hancock | Department: Department of Health and Social Care

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) clinical guidance on managing and treating eating disorders, and the Eating Disorder Commissioning Guide, are both clear that people should not be rejected for treatment solely on the grounds of weight or Body Mass Index (BMI).

The NICE clinical guideline for the recognition and treatment of an eating disorder (2017) states "Do not use single measures such as BMI or duration of illness to determine whether to offer treatment for an eating disorder (ref 1.2.8)". We expect commissioners and providers to adhere to this guidance.

The Eating Disorder Commissioning Guide recognises that "There are reported problems associated with health professionals delaying the provision of appropriate treatment due to their treatment decisions being based primarily on the young person's weight and BMI. These decisions can lead to a delay in access to appropriate treatment" and re-states that commissioners should adhere to NICE guidelines.

Source:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng69/chapter/Recommendations#identification-and-assessment>

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/cyp-eating-disorders-access-waiting-time-standard-comm-guid.pdf>

HC Deb 29 October 2018 | PQ 183240

[Eating Disorders](#)

Asked by: Lucas, Caroline

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 15 October 2018 to Question 174679 on Eating Disorders, for what reasons he has no current plans to introduce a waiting time standard for adults with an eating disorder.

Answering member: Matt Hancock | Department: Department of Health and Social Care

Mental health will be a core part of the National Health Service long-term plan, and the Department has asked NHS England to plan for significant improvements in access to good mental health services.

The waiting times targets for children and young people's eating disorders services were developed within the context of broader improvements to children's and young people's mental health services

following the publication of the Future in Mind report in 2015. NHS England has recently commissioned a national review of adult eating disorder services. Data collected is being reviewed with stakeholders to inform NHS England's understanding of the finance and workforce gaps in these services.

HC Deb 23 October 2018 | PQ 179179

[Eating Disorders](#)

Asked by: Cunningham, Mr Jim

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with (a) eating disorder units and (b) GPs throughout the country on the use of weight metrics to diagnose eating disorders; and if he will support the #DumpTheScales campaign.

Answering member: Matt Hancock | Department: Department of Health and Social Care

I have not met with eating disorder units or discussed eating disorders with general practitioners to date.

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines published in May 2017 state:

- Initial assessments in primary and secondary mental health care: Do not use single measures such as Body Mass Index (BMI) or duration of illness to determine whether to offer treatment for an eating disorder; and
- Inpatient and day patient treatment: Do not use absolute weight or BMI as a threshold when deciding whether to admit people with an eating disorder to day patient or inpatient care.

Commissioners and health professionals including general practitioners are expected to follow NICE guidelines when diagnosing and treating eating disorders. The NICE guidelines on eating disorders can be found on the NICE website at the following link:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng69>

HC Deb 18 October 2018 | PQ 179097

7. Useful links and further reading

Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman *Ignoring the alarms: How NHS eating disorder services are failing patients* HC634 2017-19
December 2017

<https://www.ombudsman.org.uk/sites/default/files/page/FINAL%20FOR%20WEB%20Anorexia%20Report.pdf>

National Institute of Health and Care Excellence Guideline *Eating disorders: recognition and treatment* May 2017

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng69>

Quality Standard *Eating disorders* September 2018

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs175>

Anorexia & Bulimia Care

<http://www.anorexiabulimiacare.org.uk/>

Beat Eating Disorders

<https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/>

Eating Disorders Awareness Week 2019

<https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/edaw>

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