
Director General for Regulation

Simon Stevens
Chief Executive
NHS England

26 January 2018

Dear Simon,

On 11 January, Full Fact copied us a letter to the chair of the Health and Social Care Select Committee on your statement that spending on mental health by NHS England has increased by 5.7% when accounting for specialised services¹. Full Fact sought clarification of the data underpinning this statement.

We understand the Chair of the committee has since written to you to seek clarification on the specific data source, and we look forward to seeing your response when it is publicly available.

I would like to make a broader point. NHS England directed us to the Mental Health Five Year Forward View Dashboard² as the underpinning source to the figure quoted. We very much welcome the way that NHS England is collating various data on mental health, which includes spending data by Clinical Commissioning Groups, in this dashboard. We have two suggestions to improve the usefulness of this dashboard:

- The dashboard includes spending information, but it is not clear what data has been used to calculate the 5.7% increase you described. We would therefore encourage NHS England to review the dashboard, to include all data needed to verify figures used publically, and to expand the commentary accompanying it so that key messages – like spending increases – are more clearly highlighted. My team would be happy to discuss developments to strengthen the public value of the dashboard with the responsible team in NHS England.
- It may be that this dashboard is not as well-known as it could be. It might be useful to promote the dashboard as a useful resource to monitor the Mental Health Five Year Forward View.

I have copied in the National Statistician and the Head of Professions at NHS England, NHS Digital, Department of Health and Social Care, Office for National Statistics, and Public Health England; each of these organisations have responsibility for mental health data, a topic identified as an area where there are considerable data gaps as well as an area where coherence and accessibility need to be improved beyond this case in hand.

Yours sincerely



Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation

¹ Q71 of the health committee session on 10 October 2017:

<http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/health-committee/work-of-nhs-england-and-nhs-improvement/oral/71222.html>

² Published since 2016: www.england.nhs.uk/publication/mental-health-five-year-forward-view-dashboard/