

Programme for Government 2019/20

SAMH Briefing

Introduction

SAMH has represented the voice of people most affected by mental health problems in Scotland for more than 90 years. SAMH is dedicated to mental health and wellbeing for all: with a vision of a society where people are able to live their lives fully, regardless of present or past circumstances.

Today, in over 60 communities we work with adults and young people providing mental health social care support, services in primary care, schools and further education, among others. These services together with our national programme work in See Me, respectme, suicide prevention and active living, inform our policy and campaign work to influence positive social change.

This year's Programme for Government commits to a number of new initiatives; however, many of the commitments are not new. This is particularly the case for young people who, despite multiple announcements from the Scottish Government, are still struggling to access support. The time for speeches is over: we need clear, specific actions so that people get help when they need it.

Children and Young People's Services

SAMH welcomes the announcement that a 24/7 crisis support service for young people and their families will be introduced and that this will include a text service for young people. This must be sustainably funded; we await the detail of what funding this new initiative will receive.

The announcement that the community mental wellbeing services for 5-24 years olds - promised in the 2018-19 Programme for Government - will now be backed by £17m worth of funding is also welcomed. This is described in today's Programme for Government as a "community wellbeing service", a subtle but major change. This new initiative must focus on the mental wellbeing of our young people, rather than a generic community service.

SAMH calls for:

- **A timetable for urgent development and implementation of the community mental wellbeing service for 5-24 year olds, promised in the 2018-19 Programme for Government.**

While we are pleased that national expectations on standards and specifications for CAMHS will be introduced, a year after the Scottish Government accepted all 29 recommendations of the Audit of Rejected Referrals we have no evidence of plans for real change for CAMHS.

This comes after figures released this week (Tuesday 3rd September) show that 7,518 children and young people – 1 in every 5 that asked for mental health support - have been refused help from CAMHS since the audit was published.¹

SAMH would like to see the following progressed:

- **Plans to ensure that by this Christmas, at least 50% of those being rejected from CAMHS are being directly re-routed to another appropriate service.**
- **Plans to ensure that by June 2020, every child referred gets routed to a service or support, which could include CAMHS, by implementing a multi-agency assessment system.**

School Staff Training

SAMH is disappointed that the Scottish Government has not committed to a national training programme for all school staff. The Programme for Government 2018-19 promised that every local authority would be offered training for teachers in mental health first aid. Whilst we acknowledge small sums of money have been provided to local authorities, we are yet to see figures on how many school staff have been trained using this funding. This is not good enough..

In 2017, two in three teachers told SAMH that they hadn't received enough training in mental health to allow them to do their jobs properly; two-thirds of non-teaching staff have never completed any training in mental health.²

SAMH calls for:

- **The creation of a consistent national programme to train all school staff in mental health.**

Psychological Therapies

While we welcome the additional £15.5 million to help NHS Boards achieve the waiting times improvement trajectories for both CAMHS and psychological therapies, SAMH would like to see more robust and ambitious action taken. In the first quarter of this year, for the first time since it was introduced, no NHS Board met the psychological therapies waiting time target.³

¹ ISD Scotland, [Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services \(CAMHS\) in Scotland: Waiting Times and Inpatient Activity and CAMHS Workforce in Scotland](#)

² SAMH, [Going To Be Well Trained](#), 2017

³ ISD Scotland, [Psychological Therapies Waiting Times in NHS Scotland](#), 2019

Specifically we are calling for:

- **An independent inquiry into the failure of NHS Boards to meet the 18 week target for psychological therapies.**

Employment and Mental Health

We know that Individual Placement Support (IPS) is two to three times more effective than any other employment intervention for people with mental health problems.⁴ Despite a commitment in the Fair Start Scotland programme to deliver IPS 'where required', IPS delivery is very patchy meaning that employment support for people with mental health problems is a postcode lottery.

SAMH acknowledges that in the Programme for Government there is a commitment to evaluating the employment support offered to people with mental health problems. This does not go far enough.

SAMH wants to see:

- **IPS provision adequately funded and made available across the whole of Scotland.**

Suicide Prevention

SAMH is proud to be a member of the National Suicide Prevention Leadership Group (NSPLG). We're pleased that the Programme for Government reiterates the work of the NSPLG; this work is essential in the context of an increase in suicide Scotland from 680 deaths in 2017 to 724 in 2018.⁵

SAMH believes further actions are necessary to reduce suicide in Scotland, beyond actions announced in the Scotland's Suicide Prevention Action Plan: Every Life Matters.

We are calling for:

- **Roll out of Community Triage nationally, to provide police officers with direct access to mental health professionals to support decision making and reduce inappropriate detentions of people in psychiatric distress or crisis.**
- **Refreshed national mental health and suicide prevention training to retain Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), with its focus on providing skills to intervene to support someone in crisis.**
- **Clarity on the proposed Crisis Care Agreement, including when the Crisis Care Agreement will be in place locally.**

⁴ Centre for Mental Health, Priorities for Mental Health: Economic report for NHS England Mental Health Taskforce, 2016

⁵ ScotPHO, [Suicide: Scottish trends](#), 2019



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If you have any questions about our calls to action, please do not hesitate to contact the SAMH Public Affairs team on 0141 530 1037.