

Campaign to save Mental Health Services

We in the Campaign to save Mental Health Services in Norfolk and Suffolk find it hard to stomach Norman Lamb's continuous efforts to present himself as the champion of the mentally ill. He has been a Health Minister and Secretary of State with special responsibility for social care and mental health for 4 years now. Under his watch funding for mental health has actually fallen for the first time for many years creating a national crisis in the provision of acute psychiatric care (over 1700 beds have been lost nationally).

In Norfolk and Suffolk, the so-called Nicholson challenge has meant a cut of £40 million over the last 4 years leading to the decimation of community care for the most vulnerable, the abolition of community mental health nurses who were attached to GP surgeries, the closure of specialist assertive outreach teams which provided intensive support and monitoring of the most severely mentally ill, the loss of the Mental Health Homeless Team in Norwich, and the loss of over 120 beds in Norfolk and Suffolk. Crisis Teams – one of Norman Lamb's pet subjects – have also been badly hit by downgrading of staff and the loss of experienced practitioners. Currently, the main provider of mental health services, Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust (NSFT), is in a precarious financial state and because of concerns about the standard of care has just been subject to an intensive inspection by the CQC. At any one time if any of your readers requires an urgent admission to psychiatric hospital it is unlikely that this will be to a local hospital. Last week there were 48 patients from Norfolk scattered across the country in hospitals in places as far away as Darlington and Weston-super-mare (see our attached Map of Shame). Other patients experience serious delays before they can be admitted and some have had to be held illegally in police custody until a bed can be found. Despite this dire situation NSFT are now facing a further 5 years of cost-saving (the 1.8% deflator) which will mean a further £40 million of cuts over the next 5 years and even more redundancies and loss of services.

Norman Lamb is fully aware of these problems because we have let him know consistently the full extent of the crisis, and to be fair to Mr Lamb he is very supportive of individuals who come to him for help, and therefore has a good grasp of the situation on the ground. However, he claims he is helpless to do anything about the funding crisis because NHS England are independent of government, He says he campaigns on behalf of mental health and now has a petition for the future funding of the NHS. But is he not a Minister in the current Government? Why does he need to campaign against himself? He and his fellow MPs voted for the Health and Social Care Bill which created our current system of funding. What is the point of voting for Mr Lamb if even as a Health Minister he is helpless? The Liberal Democrats are once again making promises about the future funding of mental health services, but we remember Clegg's record on tuition fees. If you would like to support the Campaign please visit our website <http://norfolksuffolkmentalhealthcrisis.org.uk/> or contact us on 01263 825967. We are holding an anniversary open meeting on 27/11/14 at 7.30 pm Vauxhall Centre, Norwich, where we will be debating the above issues and planning the next steps in our campaign. ALL WELCOME.

Terry Skyrme, on behalf of the Campaign to Save Mental Health Services in N&S.



Enslin Limited Dental Surgery

Registering New NHS Patients

We provide the full range of NHS dental treatments in a friendly and relaxed environment.

If you have a problem with your teeth or need a check-up, contact us on **01263 515229** 

Or you can call in to our practice to register.

Enslin Ltd Dental Surgery
17-19 West Street, Cromer

Mental Health Issues - Norman Lamb Responds

There has always been an institutional bias against mental health in our NHS, and in society. When the last government legislated for waiting time standards in physical health, they left out mental health. When they introduced a right to patient choice for hospital treatment, they left out mental health. And when they set up "Payment by Results" to tackle long waiting lists, Labour left out mental health. This has inevitably meant that, when money is tight, mental health loses out in local spending decisions.

As health minister, I have been determined to tackle this. We have legislated to be clear that mental health must have complete equality with physical health in the NHS. In April this year we extended the right of choice to include mental health treatment. And at the Liberal Democrat conference in Glasgow last month, we announced from next year the first waiting time standards for mental health too, so most patients will be guaranteed access to talking therapies in as little as six weeks from referral. We will also introduce a new standard next year to start treatment within two weeks of a first episode of psychosis.

At the same time as we announced these new standards, we published a five year vision for the introduction of comprehensive access and waiting time standards across mental health. The aim is to achieve real equality for those suffering mental ill health. These announcements were enthusiastically welcomed by charities nationally. It was described as a watershed moment.

We are also tackling the unacceptable inequality in mental health crisis care: Norfolk recently signed up to the "Crisis Care Concordat", which sets clear national standards for emergency treatment. And in 2015/16 we are investing £30m extra in liaison psychiatry to make sure that psychiatric help is available in A and E departments.

But I am far from complacent: the fact is that in much of the country mental health services are still nowhere near good enough. In particular services for young people are sometimes completely unacceptable. I launched a Task Force earlier this year to look at how we can modernise services, improving access and ending the current "cliff-edge" when people move from under-18 to adult services. And as part of my current campaign (www.normanlamb.org.uk) to secure extra funding for the NHS next year, I am hoping we can secure investment to start delivering the improvements to young people's services we desperately need.

North Norfolk MP recognised nationally for work on mental health

This week North Norfolk MP Norman Lamb has been recognised by two organisations for his work on mental health.

Norman attended a ceremony with the Political Studies Association to accept their annual award for "Best use of evidence in policy making", recognising his work in driving reform of mental health services that have been neglected for far too long.

The judges for the PSA award said, "Norman Lamb was the unanimous winner of this award for his outstanding work on mental health. His work with the Royal College of Nursing, Skills for Health and Skills for Care to develop new guidance for professionals as well as workforce training guidelines must also be strongly commended".

The judges also praised Lamb for his launch of Positive and Safe, a two-year programme to end the deliberate use of face-down restraint in all health and care settings.

Norman Lamb said, "It is a real honour to have been recognised by the Political Studies Association and Nuffield College for my work on mental health, and more generally. Mental health is an area that has been neglected for far too long and I am determined to ensure patients can access the support they need."

