Written Question

Sarah Wollaston (Totnes Conservative)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps his Department has taken to increase the (a) availability and (b) standard of provision for psychological and social support for new mothers of pre-term babies since 2009.

Paul Burstow (Minister of State (Care Services), Health)

More and more people across England are getting access to psychological therapies for the most common mental health problems, such as anxiety disorders or depression. About 140 new psychological therapy services are now up and running around the country and by March 2011 60% of primary care trusts will have an Improving Access to Psychological Therapies service. 900,000 extra people with depression and/or anxiety disorders will have been seen in the first three years of the programme. Some 3,600 more therapists will have been employed in the same period, already meeting the programme's March 2011 target.

The Health settlement in the spending review included funding to expand access to talking therapies. The money will complete the roll-out of the nationwide training programme and services which began in 2008 and begin to extend the benefits of talking therapies to the young, the elderly, those with serious mental illness and those who have anxiety disorders or depression alongside long-term physical health conditions like diabetes, heart or lung disease. By March 2011, the roll-out will achieve 60% geographical coverage of England. The spending review settlement will complete this by 2014-15.

With regard to social support, the coalition programme committed the Government to reforming the system of social care in England to provide much more control to individuals and their carers. On 16 November 2010 we published 'A Vision for Adult Social Care: Capable Communities and Active Citizens', which sets the context for the future direction of adult social care in England and a copy has been placed in the Library.

The Vision focuses on the Government commitments to:

break down barriers between health and social care funding to incentivise preventative action;

extend the greater rollout of personal budgets to give people and their carers more control and purchasing power; and

use direct payments to carers and better community-based provision to improve access to respite care.

We want to make services more personalised, more preventative and more focused on delivering the best outcomes for those who use them. The document also states that councils should provide personal budgets, preferably as a direct payment, for everyone
eligible, by 2013, and develop the Big Society, with more local preventative activity to support people's independence.

On 4 November 2010, the social care sector published 'Think Local, Act Personal: Next Steps for Transforming Adult Social Care', which sets out the sector's commitment to moving forward with personalisation and community-based support. To support its implementation, a number of best practice documents have been published and are available on the Putting People First website at:

www.puttingpeoplefirst.org.uk

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