**Meeting of APPG for Eating Disorders**

Thursday 4th February

3:00-4:00pm

**Date**: 04/02/2021

**Attendees:** Scott Benton MP (SB), Wera Hobhouse MP (WH), Ruth Jones (MP), Caroline Nokes MP (CN), Baroness Parminter (BP), Catherine West MP (CW), Lucy Cserna, *representing Sarah Champion MP* (LC), Charlotte Penelope Tosti, *Parliamentary Assistant to Bridget Phillipson MP* (CT)

Suzanne Baker, *F.E.A.S.T.* (SB), Sophie Clark, *Beat* (SC), Hellen Missen, *F.E.A.S.T.* (HM), Jonathan Kelly, *Beat* (JK), Dr Ashish Kumar, *Faculty of Eating Disorders, The Royal College of Psychiatrists* (AK), Katherine Pugh, *Beat* (KP) and Andrew Radford, *Beat* (AR)

**Apologies:** George Howarth MP

1. Welcome from Wera Hobhouse MP
2. Overview of Beat’s work on funding allocated to children and young people’s community eating disorder services

AR provided the overview that since the introduction of the ‘Access and Waiting Time Standard for Children and Young People with an Eating Disorder’ in 2015, additional funding has been allocated to community eating disorder services in England. Under the Five Year Forward View for Mental Health additional funding for Children and Young People’s community eating disorder services in England was planned to remain at £30 million per year from 2016/17 to 2020/21. The introduction of the waiting time standards and additional funding have both had positive impacts, leading to increased access to services and decreased waiting times for children and young people.

However, Beat was alarmed by reports from clinicians in some areas that the promised additional funding was not reaching frontline services. This led to Beat conducting research on this issue.

AR highlighted the importance of this work, especially considering the increasing number of referrals to eating disorder services.

1. Presentation from Jonathan Kelly of key findings from Beat’s research, “Short-changed: Funding for children and young people’s community eating disorder services in England in 2019/20”
2. Question and Answer session

CW asked if Beat can share the specific findings for spending at individual Clinical Commissioning Group (CCGs) levels and also if Beat could expand on their recommendation for a workforce strategy.

KP responded that Beat will be able to make the data for individual CCGs available at a later date and that Beat will be contacting individual CCGs with the findings of the “Short-changed” research in advance of publishing it. This approach received support from the group.

CW suggested that Beat also share the research findings with council leaders and cabinet members for health at local authorities.

JK added that the question of a workforce strategy is a complex one and that a collaborative approach is required. AK supported this and highlighted the need to reduce variation across eating disorder services and ensure that all services are able to provide an evidence-based approach. This is an area of interest for the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

BP raised the question of why the allocated funding is not being spent.

JK responded that there are likely to be several factors that vary in importance from place to place, including stigmatising attitudes, the fact that CCGs are not audited against eating disorder spend in the same way that they are for total mental health spend, and to a lesser extent issues with recruitment and retention of staff. JK added that the example that AK gave earlier about how extra funding was eventually secured in his local area shows the value of data being used to challenge CCG leaders.

WH and AK raised questions about how funding levels are determined and the role of clinicians in this, in light of the reforms to NHS structures brought about by the 2012 Health and Social Care Act. JK responded that legislation will soon be brought before Parliament about a new set of reforms to NHS structures and governance, however given the urgency of the issue, Beat’s suggestion is that we focus on utilising this report to challenge CCG leaders. It was suggested that this conversation be continued outside of the meeting.

1. Next steps

KP asked APPG members if they would support “Short-changed” being published as an APPG report. KP clarified that before publishing the paper Beat will share it with NHS England, and allow time for them to provide feedback. Following this, Beat intends to share the report with CCGs and allow CCGs the opportunity to respond before then sharing the report more widely.

CW raised the suggestion that before the “Short-changed” paper is published as an APPG report, it would be helpful to have feedback from an external organisation to review the paper and, in particular, the data in the paper. This suggestion was supported by the group and a two-staged approach was agreed upon whereby the APPG members will wait until NHS England have offered feedback on the paper, before voting to determine if the paper will be published as an APPG report.

AR expressed support for this approach and emphasised the importance of sharing the report findings with CCGs as soon as possible.

**Action: Beat to share the “Short-changed” report with NHS England, and allow NHS England time to provide feedback on the report.**

**Beat to share the “Short-changed” report with CCGs and allow CCGs time to provide feedback on the report.**

**Dependent on the feedback given by NHS England, APPG members to vote on the proposal for the “Short-changed” paper to be published as an APPG report.**

CW also suggested sharing the findings of the Short-changed” paper with Nadine Dorries MP.

**Action: WH and Beat to contact Nadine Dorries MP about the findings of the “Short-changed” report and to explore the option of Nadine Dorries MP attending a future APPG meeting.**

1. Updates on the inquiry into eating disorders research funding

JK provided the update that the inquiry into eating disorders research funding is ongoing and that the call for written evidence has now closed. Beat received many helpful submissions, particularly from clinicians and academics. However, thus far, there has been less engagement from large funders. The next step for the inquiry will be an oral evidence session, which is being planned for March.

1. Any other business

WH drew attention to the fact that there will be an AGM for the APPG between March and July 2021.

WH also highlighted the recent work that Vicky Ford MP has done to raise awareness of eating disorders, including speaking about her own lived experience.

**Action: WH to reach out to Vicky Ford on behalf of the APPG to thank her for drawing attention to eating disorders.**

SC informed the group that Eating Disorder Awareness Week (EDAW) will be taking place during the first week of March (1st-7th) and that the theme for EDAW is binge eating disorder. SC encouraged members to draw attention to the week by applying for an adjournment debate and asking parliamentary questions during the week.

**Action: APPG members to apply for an adjournment debate on eating disorders during eating disorder awareness week.**