

Aide-Mémoire

Information to support discussions with Ministers for Mental Health in other jurisdictions

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To:	Hon Matt Dooney, Minister for Mental Health		
Consulted:	Health New Zealand: <input type="checkbox"/> Māori Health Authority: <input type="checkbox"/>		

Contact for telephone discussion

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Aide-Mémoire

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To: Hon Matt Doocey, Minister for Mental Health

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Purpose: This aide memoire responds to your request for additional information to support potential discussions with international Ministerial counterparts with mental health or similar portfolios. It follows initial information provided in December 2023 [H2023033535 refers] with more detailed information about Australia and Canada, as requested.

Background:

- New Zealand has extensive health engagement and networks internationally. The Global Health Group at the Ministry of Health | Manatū Hauora (the Ministry) manages relationships with the World Health Organization (WHO), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Commonwealth Health Ministers and related fora that take place in the Pacific (eg, the Pacific Heads of Health Meeting).
- Subject matter experts within the Ministry also maintain connections with technical counterparts in health entities. For example, New Zealand is a member of the Global Leadership Exchange for Mental Health.

Comment:

- This aide memoire attaches information to support potential discussions with Ministers for Mental Health or similar in other jurisdictions, with a focus on Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, Scotland, Wales and Ireland.
- This includes biographies of relevant Ministers, information on any recent engagement and a proposed engagement approach. As requested, we have included further information that we have been able to gather in relation to the portfolio arrangements and priorities in Australia and Canada, including their use of digital supports.
- Overseas officials have advised that the Australian and Canadian Ministers would be interested in scheduling introductory calls. This

can be arranged through our Global Health contacts. If requested, we can also enquire about introductory calls with Ministers from the other jurisdictions.

- These discussions would provide opportunities to get a better understanding of how other jurisdictions have structured Ministerial arrangements for mental health and related areas, how those portfolios interface with wider health arrangements in those countries, as well as any cross-government engagement in relation to mental health beyond the health system. There would also be opportunities to discuss work in shared priority areas.
- We have attached talking points to support meetings with your Australian and Canadian counterparts.
- This aide-mémoire discloses all relevant information.



Robyn Shearer

Deputy Director-General

Clinical, Community and Mental Health |

Te Pou Whakakaha

Date: 25 January 2024

Hon Emma McBride

Australia's Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention and Assistant Minister Rural and Regional Health

Biography

Assistant Minister McBride is the Federal Member for the division of Dobell on the Central Coast of New South Wales. She was first elected in 2016 and following her re-election in 2019, she was appointed Labour's Shadow Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Shadow Assistant Minister for Carers. She is now the Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, and Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Health.

Prior to entering politics, Assistant Minister McBride was a registered pharmacist who worked in the health sector for over 20 years, both in Australia and abroad. She was a Specialist Mental Health Pharmacist and the Chief Pharmacist at Wyong Hospital for nearly 10 years. Prior to entering Parliament, she was the Deputy Director of Pharmacy for Central Coast Local Health District. Assistant Minister McBride's background and experience as a healthcare professional led her to parliament, where she strives for better health services for all Australians.

Assistant Minister McBride is a passionate advocate for quality health care, close to home. She understands the unique challenges facing rural and regional communities when it comes to accessing health care and she hopes to play a role in shaping public policy that promotes the health and wellbeing of every Australian, regardless of where they live.

Structure of the portfolio

We understand that the portfolio structure and responsibilities of the Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention are currently under review, so overseas officials were unable to provide any significant insights at this stage. We recommend this as a focus for discussion with Assistant Minister McBride.

Priorities within the mental health portfolio

The Australian Government is committed to reforming the mental health and suicide prevention systems, ensuring that Australians receive equitable access to the care they need. The National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement (National Agreement) was agreed by all governments in 2021. It aims to achieve systemic, whole-of-government reform to deliver a comprehensive, coordinated, consumer-focused mental health and suicide prevention system with joint accountability across all governments. There are bilateral arrangements (schedules) with each state and territory to allow for local priorities and needs.

Better Access initiative

The Better Access initiative has been running since 2006 and gives Medicare (publicly funded universal health care insurance scheme) rebates to eligible people, so they can access the mental health services they need. Support is available from eligible general practitioners (GPs) and other medical practitioners, psychologists, social workers and occupational therapists. Eligible people can receive up to 10 individual and up to 10 group allied mental health services each year.

The rebate is available to people with a diagnosed mental disorder. The aim of the initiative is to improve treatment and management for people who have mild to moderate mental health conditions. These are cases where short-term evidence-based interventions are most likely to be useful.

Since 30 March 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, everyone can now access these supports via telehealth.

Access to mental health services for those in regional, rural and remote areas with a focus on developing the psychology workforce

A recent evaluation of the Better Access initiative found many Australians – particularly people with lower incomes and those living in regional, rural and remote areas – were missing out on much-needed care.

To support increased access to care, including for those in rural and remote areas, the Government recently invested \$91.3 million to immediately address acute bottlenecks in the psychology training pipeline, including:

- incentivising universities to create 500 new postgraduate psychology places in relevant areas of endorsed practice
- funding 500 one-year internships for provisional psychologists in the 5+1 pathway (after five years of accredited study)
- fully subsidising 2,000 Psychology Board of Australia approved supervisor training places, including 1,000 refresher places
- redesigning psychology higher education pathways in partnership with the sector to support longer term reform.

Fifty percent of internships and supervisor training places will be allocated to priority cohorts including people from regional, rural and remote areas, as a first priority, to support increased participation of these cohorts.

The Government is also supporting the growth of the mental health workforce, including psychologists, through the National Mental Health Pathways to Practice Program Pilot (Pathways to Practice). Pathways to Practice is providing over 1,600 supervised placements for provisional and student psychologists, nursing and allied health students and graduates in mental health settings.

Access to free and low-cost services

In addition to services available through Better Access, the Government funds a range of free or low-cost services for people with or at risk of mental illness including regional services commissioned by Australia's 31 Primary Health Networks, a national network of *Head to Health* Adult Mental Health Centres as well as online support, and *headspace* which provides online and in-person mental health, work and study support to young people aged 12–25 years as well as their carers.

Role of technology or digital health

The Australian Government funds a range of digital mental health services, including crisis support, helplines and webchat, clinician-supported online therapies, self-directed education programs and tools, and moderated peer support forums. These services are nationally available, free, or low cost,

and cover a range of counselling, treatment and crisis support services, including suicide prevention and peer support. People do not require a referral to access these services.

Nationally available online mental health treatment programmes and other support services can be found on the Commonwealth's national *Head to Health* website. It includes features and functionality to help more people experiencing mental health and wellbeing challenges find and access services that meet their needs more seamlessly, by making it easier to navigate care options and connecting users with the right services at the right time.

There are also additional resources for health professionals and GPs and a service finder, which includes an Initial Assessment and Referral (IAR) level of care filter to refer people to suitable services using a blended model of care.

Another initiative in Australia is Beyond Blue. Beyond Blue is a national, independent, not-for-profit organisation and a bipartisan initiative of the Australian, state and territory governments. It has been operating for more than 20 years and provides a reliable source for mental health information, support and advice. Its website offers access to self-assessment tools, peer support, online and telehealth counselling, resources to learn about mental health (including resources tailored to First Nations people), as well as directories to search for a range of mental health professionals with guidance on how they can help. Beyond Blue also undertakes policy and advocacy across a wide range of mental health areas. Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora will be providing you a more detailed overview of the services and approaches that Beyond Blue provides.

Recent engagement and proposed approach

Former Minister Hon Aupito William Sio met with Assistant Minister McBride at the sidelines of the 15th Pacific Health Ministers Meeting in Tonga in 2023. This meeting was a productive exchange where cooperation between our countries' health agencies was discussed.

We have raised the idea of an initial outreach to our Australian colleagues, who indicated that Assistant Minister McBride would be very open to engaging. Her Office has provided options for available dates and times in the next few weeks, which we have provided to your Office for consideration.

Below are suggested talking points for a discussion with Assistant Minister McBride, noting the shared priorities around the *Head to Health* digital initiative, similarities to the Access and Choice programme and potential lessons for New Zealand; as well as the workforce initiatives they are implementing particularly around psychology.

Suggested talking points for a meeting with Assistant Minister McBride

- You may be aware that our Government has recently established a new dedicated Mental Health Ministerial portfolio, and I have the privilege of being New Zealand's first Minister for Mental Health.
- I will need to work closely and collaboratively with the Minister of Health and other Ministers across sectors that contribute to better mental health outcomes.
- I am interested in any insights from Australia and your role as Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention on the structure and scope of your portfolio, and how you work across the wider health system and other sectors.
 - How do you use your portfolio to influence outcomes and actions across health and the wide range of sectors that contribute to mental health and suicide prevention?
- There are some similar challenges in Australia and also globally in the workforce development and retention space. We have been undertaking a range of projects to address this in New Zealand.
- Developing a diverse mental health and addiction workforce is one of my top priorities, and I am particularly interested in the psychology workforce. I was interested to see you also have a focus on developing the psychology workforce, including in rural communities.
 - What have been your key insights from or drivers for this work? Are you starting to see the successes you want from that work?
- I understand the *Head to Health* initiative in Australia has similarities to our Access and Choice programme, which is rolling out primary mental health and addiction services in GP practices, Māori, Pacific and youth-specific settings nationally.
 - What benefits are you seeing as a result of the *Head to Health* initiative? Have you seen any impact on easing pressures on your specialist services?
- I applaud the significant investment by the Australian Government in digital mental health. I am also interested in how we can make the most of digital technology in supporting people with mental healthcare needs.
 - Can you tell me more about some of the successful approaches or initiatives you have seen in Australia to support this? Have there been particular challenges?

Other Australian State Ministers of Mental Health

Due to the two-tier approach of government in Australia, several states also have Ministers of Mental Health. It may be worth considering engaging with them once relationship established with Hon McBride.

These include:

- Victoria – Ms Ingrid Stitt, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Aging, Minister for Multicultural affairs
- Tasmania – Jeremy Rockliff, Premier of Tasmania, Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing, Minister for Tourism and Hospitality, Minister for State Development, Trade and the Antarctic
- Australian Capital Territory (ACT) – Emma Davidson, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Families and Community Services, Minister for Disability, Minister for Veterans and Seniors, Minister for Justice
- Queensland – Shannon Fentiman, Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women
- Northern Territory – Hon Selena Uibo, Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, Minister for Health, Minister for Remote Housing and Homelands, Minister for Parks and Rangers, Minister for Local Decision Making, Minister for Public Employment, Minister for Corporate and Digital Development
- New South Wales (NSW) – Hon Rose Jackson, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Water, Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness, Minister for Youth, Minister for the Far North
- Western Australia (WA) – Hon Amber-Jade Sanderson, Minister for Health and Mental Health
- South Australia – Chris Picton, Premier of South Australia. Minister for Health and Wellbeing.

We would recommend engaging with Ms Stitt, the Minister for Mental Health in Victoria, based on recent changes to their mental health legislation in 2023, which may provide insights for New Zealand's work to repeal and replace our mental health and addiction legislation and planning for implementation.

We are happy to provide detailed information on any or all of these Ministers and can arrange virtual meetings as required.

Hon Ya'ara Saks

Canada's Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health

Biography

The Honourable Ya'ara Saks was first elected as the Member of Parliament for the district of York Centre in 2020. She has previously served as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development. She was also a member of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development and the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, as well as various parliamentary associations and interparliamentary groups.

Minister Saks is a long-time community advocate and leader focused on promoting health and addressing inequalities in society. Before entering politics, she was a successful business owner and the Director of Trauma Practice for Healthy Communities, a Toronto-based mental health charity working for better access to mental health services.

Minister Saks brings a global perspective to her community engagement work. She has held advisory roles in policy, communications, and project management, having worked in the Office of the Mayor of Jerusalem and on the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

Minister Saks holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Middle East Studies from McGill University and a Master of International Relations and Diplomacy from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Structure of the portfolio

The Prime Minister of Canada has set a clear mandate for the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health to work with the Minister of Health to build a healthier future, with a particular focus on ensuring that health inequities are understood and addressed, including for Indigenous Peoples, Black Canadians and vulnerable Canadians.

The expectations are that mental health care is treated as a full and equal part of the Canadian universal health care system, working in close collaboration with provinces and territories, and leading a whole-of-society approach to address problematic substance use in Canada.

The commitments expected of the Canadian Minister of Mental Health and Addictions include:

- Working with the Minister of Health, and with the support of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, to establish a permanent, ongoing Canada Mental Health Transfer to help expand the delivery of high-quality, accessible and free mental health services, including for prevention and treatment
- In order to support the mental health of Canadians, develop and implement a comprehensive, evidence-based plan, leveraging existing and new investments, including to:
 - develop mental health standards, with a particular focus on health equity
 - sustain improved access to virtual mental health services with *Wellness Together Canada* (discussed further below)
 - ensure timely access to perinatal mental health services

- provide new funding for student mental health increasing access overall and enable targeted supports to Black and racialized students at post-secondary institutions across Canada
- advance a comprehensive strategy to address problematic substance use in Canada
- Working with other Ministers to:
 - co-develop and invest in a distinctions-based Mental Health and Wellness Strategy to meet the needs of indigenous communities, including culturally appropriate wraparound services for addiction and trauma, suicide and life promotion
 - advance Canada's first-ever National Action Plan on Post-Traumatic Stress Injuries, including additional investment to support the health and wellbeing of first responders
 - ensure Canadian Armed Forces members and Veterans have access to adequate and tailored mental health resources and services
 - explore pathways to increase the accessibility of mental health services in rural areas.

Mental health priorities including the role of technology or digital health

There are two main priorities identified in relation to Federal, Provincial and Territorial Collaboration on Mental Health and Substance Use in 2023/24.

Priority One: Support to individuals with complex needs

- Development of a best practice guide on evidence-based approaches and critical partnerships
- Creation of a mental health and substance use workforce plan for building and retaining a workforce with the right skillsets

Priority 2: Supporting mental wellbeing with a focus on service for children and youth

- Development of evidence-based resources and programs through mental health literacy
- Scaling up the integrated youth services model
- Scan of promising practices for prevention/promotion approaches targeting young people
- Scan of best practices related to supports for children aged 0-12 years

Digital health also plays an important role to support mental health in Canada. During the pandemic, the Canadian Government launched *Wellness Together Canada*, an online portal which offers free, virtual mental health and substance use resources and supports to Canadians.

To further support digital mental health and wellness initiatives and prevent bullying and cyberbullying, the Canadian Government has also funded the Kids Help Phone to support the mental wellness of young people from Indigenous, Black, newcomer, rural, remote, and underserved communities across Canada.

Canada has also implemented a three-digit suicide crisis line, which falls within the remit of the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

Recent engagement and proposed approach

During the 76th World Health Assembly in 2023, the former Canadian Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, Hon Minister Carolyn Bennet, hosted a luncheon roundtable. The purpose of this was for member states and stakeholders to share experiences and good practices in building community

resilience for health emergency preparedness and response, with a particular focus on protecting against or mitigating impacts on mental health and wellbeing. The New Zealand delegation attended the roundtable and appreciated the quality of the exchange on this important issue.

If requested, we can contact Canadian colleagues to request an introductory call with Minister Saks. Talking points are provided below

Suggested talking points for a meeting with Hon Ya'ara Saks

- You may be aware that our Government has recently established a new dedicated Mental Health Ministerial portfolio, and I have the privilege of being New Zealand's first Minister for Mental Health. Similar to your portfolios, I am also an Associate Minister of Health.
- I will need to work closely and collaboratively with the Minister of Health and other Ministers across sectors that contribute to better mental health outcomes.
- I am interested in any insights from Canada and your role as Minister for Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health on the structure and scope of your portfolio, and how you work across the wider health system and other sectors.
 - How do you use your portfolio to influence outcomes and actions across health and the wide range of sectors that contribute to mental health and suicide prevention?
- There are some similar challenges in Canada and also globally in the workforce development and retention space. We have been undertaking a range of projects to address this in New Zealand.
- Developing a diverse mental health and addiction workforce is one of my top priorities. I understand one of Canada's priorities for federal, provincial and territorial collaboration is the creation of a mental health and substance use workforce plan for building and retaining a workforce with the right skillsets.
 - What are your top workforce development priorities? What initiatives have been developed out of this work and are you able to share any particular successes?
- I am also interested in your work in Canada on supporting mental wellbeing with a focus on services for children and youth. Specifically, in relation to prevention and promotion approaches targeting young people and best practices related to supports for children under 12 years.
 - Can you tell me more about the successful prevention and promotion approaches for young people? How do you work with the Education sector on mental wellbeing?
- I am interested in expanding and improving digital mental health.
 - Do you have any reflections from your experience with *Wellness Together Canada*? Has this been a purposeful approach? Have there been any challenges?

Hon Maria Caulfield

United Kingdom's Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Mental Health and Women's Health Strategy)

Biography and overview of the portfolio

The Honourable Maria Caulfield is MP for Lewes and has been an MP continuously since 7 May 2015. Minister Caulfield was a National Health Service (NHS) nurse specialising in cancer treatment and became a Senior Sister at the Royal Marsden NHS Hospital. Her career in the NHS lasted over 20 years. She became involved in local politics after joining a campaign to save local hospitals in the Brighton area.

She was previously Minister of State for Health at the Department for Health and Social Care between July 2022 and September 2022, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Patient Safety and Primary Care) from September 2021 to July 2022, and assistant government whip from December 2019 to September 2021.

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Mental Health and Women's Health Strategy is responsible for:

- mental health:
 - children and young people and early intervention
 - Mental Health Act
 - suicide prevention and crisis prevention
 - bereavement
- women's health and maternity services
- gender identity services
- disabilities, including autism
- offender health
- patient safety.

Recent priorities

In 2022 the United Kingdom Government issued a call for evidence to inform a new, 10-year cross-government mental health and wellbeing plan. However, in January 2023, they announced it will publish a Major Conditions Strategy that will include mental health, instead of a standalone strategy. It said a joined-up strategy will ensure mental health conditions are considered alongside physical health conditions.

The *NHS Long Term Plan* (2019) includes a pledge to give mental health services a growing share of the NHS budget, worth at least £2.3 billion a year by 2023/24. The Government's current commitments on mental health up to 2023/24 are set out in the *NHS Long Term Plan*. The Health and Social Care Committee Expert Panel and the National Audit Office have carried out reviews of the Government's progress against its commitments. They have raised concerns that even if the commitments are met, there will be a gap between the number of people with mental health conditions and the number receiving treatment.

In 2023, the UK government announced a national investigation of mental health inpatient services, to look at topics including how providers learn from deaths and the development of a safe staffing model for inpatient services.

The *NHS Long Term Workforce Plan* (June 2023) sets out an ambition to increase training places for mental health nursing by 93% to over 11,000 places by 2031/32. This is the first comprehensive workforce plan for the NHS that focuses on training (growing the workforce), retaining (embedding the right culture and improving retention) and reforming (working and training differently).

In September 2023, the Government published a new *Suicide prevention strategy for England: 2023 to 2028*. The strategy promotes collective ownership and identifies priorities including improving data and evidence, providing tailored supports to priority population groups, addressing risk factors through early intervention, promoting online safety, improving crisis support, reducing access to means, and supporting people bereaved by suicide. The strategy is supported by an action plan with over 100 actions led by government departments, the NHS, the voluntary sector and other national partners.

Recent engagement and proposed approach

There has been little engagement with United Kingdom Ministers in this area, but there are some particular topics that may be of interest and aligned to your priorities. In particular in relation to striving for parity between physical and mental health, mental health inpatient service capacity and safety, comprehensive workforce planning, and the strategy and action plan developed for suicide prevention.

If requested, we can make contact with the United Kingdom to request an introductory call with Hon Maria Caulfield. We would provide a proposed agenda and talking points to support this meeting once scheduled.

Hon Maree Todd

Scotland's Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport

Biography and overview of the portfolio

The Honourable Maree Todd is the Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP) for Caithness. She was appointed as the Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport in March 2023.

She went to Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen, graduating in 1994 with a Bachelor of Science degree in pharmacy. Prior to entering politics, she worked for NHS Highland for 20 years, mainly as a mental health pharmacist in a psychiatric hospital.

She previously was the Minister for Children and Young People.

As the Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport, Hon Maree Todd's responsibilities related to mental health include:

- mental health wellbeing
- child and adolescent mental health
- suicide prevention
- dementia
- Mental Welfare Commission
- survivors of childhood abuse
- forensic mental health services and reform
- Care Inspectorate
- self-directed support.

Recent priorities

Scotland launched a *Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy* in June 2023 laying out the approach to improving mental health for everyone in Scotland. It included some key issues such as:

- a stronger focus on prevention and early intervention
- tackling poverty and inequality
- supporting person-centred and whole family approaches
- placing mental health and wellbeing on an equal footing with physical health
- increased community-based support and services
- increased and longer-term funding for mental health and wellbeing services, including for the third sector
- growing the workforce – developing a skilled and diverse mental health and wellbeing workforce which can operate at safe levels, and recruitment and retention.

The Scottish Strategy provides an overview of key priorities within their three key focus areas of Promote, Prevent and Provide. There is a key focus on Lived Experience being at the heart of strategy and informed by the voice of people with lived experience and practitioners, including marginalised groups, children and young people.

Recent engagement and proposed approach

There has been no recent engagement with the Scottish Minister, but there are some particular topics that may be of interest in a discussion with Minister Todd. In particular, their mental health and wellbeing strategy aligns with your priorities, so this would be an opportunity to hear more about the work underway in Scotland to implement the strategy.

If requested, we can make contact with Scottish colleagues to request an introductory call with Minister Todd. We would provide a proposed agenda and talking points to support this meeting once scheduled.

PROACTIVELY RELEASED

Hon Mary Butler

Ireland's Minister of State at the Department of Health with special responsibility for Mental Health and Older People

Biography and overview of the portfolio

The Honourable Mary Butler is Minister of State at the Department of Health with special responsibility for Mental Health and Older People. She represents the Waterford constituency and has been a member of the Dáil since 2016. She was a councillor in the Comeragh area of Waterford prior to that. She has a strong background in retail and has vast experience as a business owner.

From 2016 to July 2020, she was appointed Fianna Fáil Spokesperson for Older People and Health Promotion, also chairing the All Party Oireachtas Group on Dementia.

Minister Butler produced several pieces of legislation including Bills on Fair Deal and Mandatory Sentencing for Crimes against Older People. She was also appointed to the Special Dáil Committee with responsible for COVID-19 response.

Recent priorities

In 2022 Minister Butler launched a £1 million Mental Health fund to support the work of a number of smaller local groups who deliver vital mental health services across the country. This is designed to encourage and support local voluntary groups to respond to the particular mental health needs of their local areas. This was aligned to recommendations of the national mental health and suicide prevention strategies.

Budget 2023 included a significant investment into mental health including a dedicated approach to addressing waiting lists, especially for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and primary care psychology for young people, as well as additional Counselling and Psychology Training Places. There was also funding for new mental health developments such as Crisis Resolution Services and enhanced services in the areas of recovery, employment and tenancy supports for those with mental health difficulties. Additional capital funding was made available for improving regulatory compliance in mental health in-patient services.

Recent engagement and proposed approach

There has been no recent engagement with the Irish Minister, but Ministry of Health officials are meeting with mental health colleagues from Ireland in mid-February to discuss mental health and addiction policy matters and can provide an update following that discussion.

There are some particular topics that may be of interest in a discussion with Minister Butler, including recent work on legislation and that there are reduced restrictive practices under their legislation with no use of seclusion. The recent investment areas noted above also align to current priorities and work programmes in New Zealand, so could be a focus of an introductory call.

If requested, we can make contact with Irish colleagues to request an introductory call with Minister Butler. We would provide a proposed agenda and talking points to support this meeting once scheduled.

Hon Eluned Morgan

Wales's Minister for Health and Social Services

Biography and overview of the portfolio

The Honourable Eluned Morgan's political career started at the age of 27 when she was elected as the youngest Member of the European Parliament (EP) in 1994. She authored the Green Paper on energy on behalf of the EP and led the Parliament's discussions on the Electricity Directive where she ensured new rights for consumers and demanded that Member States of the EU addressed the issue of fuel poverty.

From late 2009 until July 2013, she worked as the Director of National Business Development in Wales for SSE (SWALEC), one of the UK's largest energy companies. During 2013-2016, served as the Shadow Minister for Wales in the House of Lords, and from 2014-2016 she served as Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs. She was granted a peerage in 2011 and is formally known as Baroness Morgan of Ely.

Minister Morgan was elected to the National Assembly in May 2016 as regional member for Mid & West Wales. On 13 December 2018 she was appointed Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language. She was appointed Minister for Health and Social Services on 13 May 2021.

As the Minister for Health and Social Services, her responsibilities related to mental health include:

- health innovation and digital
- mental health services
- suicide prevention
- dementia
- autism
- health impact of problem gambling
- substance misuse
- armed forces and veterans' health.

Hon Lynne Neagle

Wales's Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing

Biography and overview of the portfolio

The Honourable Lynne Neagle was appointed Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing on 13 May 2021.

As the Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing, responsibilities related to mental health include:

- health innovation and digital
- mental health services
- suicide prevention
- dementia
- autism

- health impact of problem gambling
- substance misuse
- armed forces and veterans' health.

Recent priorities

In 2023 the Welsh Government developed a new national mental health strategy to guide the work that the government and their partners would do to improve mental health and wellbeing in Wales based on five visions statements:

- People are able to take action to support mental wellbeing.
- There is cross-government action to protect good mental health and tackle stigma through the wider-determinants of mental health, for instance good work, education, housing, and safe communities.
- The whole system approach to emotional wellbeing is embedded across all settings including schools, youth work settings, Higher Education/Further Education and workplaces.
- The NHS, local authorities and Third Sector provide an integrated approach to mental health services – right time, right place, right service.
- Reduce suicide and self-harm, and timely access to appropriate support is provided for those affected by suicide.

Recent engagement and proposed approach

There has been no recent engagement with Welsh Ministers. Based on their new strategy and priorities, there are some overlaps and joint areas of interest between New Zealand and Wales, particularly around taking a whole-of-government and system approach.

While the Minister for Health and Social Services has responsibilities for mental health and wellbeing, it would appear that these have been delegated to the Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing, and we would recommend engaging with Minister Neagle in the first instance.

If requested, we can make contact with Welsh colleagues to request an introductory call with Minister Neagle. We would provide a proposed agenda and talking points to support this meeting once scheduled.