



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

July 2018.

Dear Constituent,

A Response to the Mental Health Units (Use of Force) Bill Campaign

I am pleased that the UK Government has thrown its support behind this important Bill, which will work to reduce the use of force in mental health units, and help prevent tragedies like the death of Seni Lewis ever happening again.

I am encouraged to note that the Government has announced reform to mental health policy in the latest Queen's Speech, in order to continue to reduce the number of people detained in police cells under the Mental Health Act. You may be pleased to know that in October 2017, the Prime Minister announced that the Government would embark on a comprehensive review of the Mental Health Act, which has remained unchanged for more than three decades. This review will examine existing practices, and address the disproportionately high rates of detention of people from ethnic minorities. I am happy to note that the review will be led by Professor Sir Simon Wessely, a former president of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, and he will consider the needs of all users of mental health services and their families, and improve the system's support for those during a mental health crisis.

While it is important that private members' bills such as this are subject to proper scrutiny in Parliament, I hope that the Bill will be able to pass as soon as possible, so that we can see these necessary changes implemented.

As healthcare is a devolved issue here in Scotland, the Bill in question only applies to England and Wales – it would be for the Scottish Government to bring forward any similar changes to the law in Scotland. I hope that the Scottish Government will pay attention to this important Bill, and will consider action to ensure that Scotland does not fall behind England and Wales in this area. People in all parts of the United Kingdom should be equally protected against the misuse of force among mental health units.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alister Jack'.

Alister Jack DL MP
Dumfries and Galloway constituency.

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