

Statement from Norman Lamb MP

“I have been campaigning for many years to improve the quality of care and support for those with mental health problems here in Norfolk. All too often the care provided is simply not adequate, and too many people are being let down by the system. I want us to create a fairer society in which people with mental health problems are able to live the life they want to lead.

“My vision for the future of mental health services is one in which people are properly cared for and supported within their community, able to live safe and fulfilled lives. I was particularly concerned at the recent CQC inspection which found that at Hellesdon Hospital it is frequently taking two months for patients to be assessed by the Community Service so they can be discharged with the support they need. For some mental health patients to be sent to beds hundreds of miles away while others are waiting two months here to be discharged is completely unacceptable.

“Norfolk needs good community mental health services to keep people out of hospital, complemented by effective crisis care for those needing urgent help. At the moment, there are many committed mental health nurses and clinicians across the county working incredibly hard to support those in need, but concerns continue to be expressed about the way our current system is working. I will continue to campaign for better care for those with mental health conditions here in Norfolk, and across the country.”

“I have also recently announced a Concordat on Crisis Mental Health Care, to which over 20 national organisations have already signed up. When someone has a mental health crisis, it is distressing and frightening for them as well as the people around them. Urgent and compassionate care in a safe place is essential – a police cell should never need to be used because mental health services are not available.

“For me, crisis care is the most stark example of the lack of equality between mental and physical health. The Concordat challenges local services to make sure beds are always available for people who need them urgently and also that police custody should never be used just because mental health services are not available. It is imperative that all areas, including Norfolk, seek to implement the principles of the Concordat as quickly as possible to ensure consistent care, no matter where you live.”