

The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP
The Chancellor of the Exchequer
Her Majesty's Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
SW1A 2HQ

24th September 2020

Dear Chancellor,

I am writing to you as a BACP registered psychotherapist and a representative of Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice in order to submit the attached document to the Treasury's Comprehensive Spending Review.

Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice is a group of 1,900 people who have suffered family bereavements as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Alongside our members, this submission has received signatures of support from a number of leading advocates, academics and organisations in mental health.

In the document, you will see that we are calling for urgent investment into specific mental health support for those who have been bereaved as a result of Covid-19. With the nation now reaching over 50,000 deaths involving Covid-19, we can estimate that there are already more than 260,000 individuals in the UK today grieving the loss of a loved one.

This has significant implications for the productivity of the UK's workforce, and unfortunately bereavement support for those who have suffered losses as a result of Covid-19 has so far been inadequate. We are desperate for the Government to change this, before it's too late.

We are asking for funding for a tiered national system of bereavement services designed specifically to support those who have lost loved ones to Covid-19. This should include helplines, professionally facilitated peer support groups and therapy groups, befriending services, counselling and, for those most in need, trauma informed psychotherapy.

We are also asking for investment in Covid-19 trauma and bereavement training for professionals and volunteers such as employers, HR professionals, teachers, medical professionals, social workers, care workers and befrienders - who are also key to our country's effort to support people bereaved by Covid-19.

There are many benefits to this investment. With adequately funded mental health support, bereaved individuals ought to be able to return to work more quickly, ensuring that the economy is not further impacted by a workforce with reduced productivity.

This service would also reduce GP appointments and referrals to the already strained NHS Mental Health and IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies) services, freeing up these services for others who desperately need it. Additionally, improved resources and new models could serve as a

platform to address other mental health issues arising from the pandemic whilst breaking down the stigma of seeking help for mental health and bereavement issues

Furthermore, money paid to counsellors and psychotherapists - many of whom have been hit hard financially by social distancing and the lockdown - goes straight back into the economy.

An individual's mental health is incredibly important for them to be able to contribute productively to society. Research suggests that by the first anniversary of the pandemic beginning, levels of depression, anxiety and post traumatic stress symptoms will have rocketed. This being the case, we as a nation have just six months until we're in a mental health pandemic as well as a viral one.

I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely,

Kathryn de Prudhoe BA (Hons) PGDip MBACP

Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice

Supported by:

Haydn Williams, Chief Executive Officer, British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy

Michaela Willis MBE, Chief Executive Officer, The National Bereavement Partnership

Sarah Hughes, Chief Executive Officer, Centre for Mental Health

The Rt Rev. the Lord Bishop of Carlisle, Bishop James Newcome, Church of England Lead Bishop on Health and Social Care

Deborah Alsina MBE, Chief Executive Officer, Independent Age

Dr Kirsten Smith, Clinical Psychologist and Trustee, The Loss Foundation

Dr Erin Hope Thompson, Founder & Director, The Loss Foundation

Andy Langford, Clinical Director, Cruse Bereavement Care

Angela Clark, Chief Executive Officer, RAFFA International Development Agency and Chair of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy Healthcare Executive

Jabeer Butt, Chief Executive Officer, Race Equality Foundation

Maurice McLeod, Chief Executive, Race on the Agenda

Atiha Claudy, Chair, Greater Manchester BAME Network & Leaders Group

Patricia Stapleton, Policy Manager, The Traveller Movement

Kahiye Alim, Director, Council of Somali Organisations

Rachel Johnston, Director, Connect 2 Counselling

Alison Penny, Coordinator, National Bereavement Alliance

Brenda Tighe, Chair/Founder, Northern Ireland Counselling Forum

Toby Sweet, Chief Executive Officer, Sunderland Counselling Service

Professor Michael Lamb, Emeritus Professor of Psychology, University of Cambridge and Director of Studies in Psychological and Behavioural Sciences at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge

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