

Written evidence on the Mental Health Bill submitted by the Money and Mental Health Policy Institute

10 June 2025

Executive Summary

- Financial problems are a major contributor to people experiencing a mental health crisis, and can also make it much harder to recover from one.
- However, the various tools that currently exist that help support people when they are in a mental health crisis, such as *Care and Treatment Plans* and *Advanced Choice Documents* are underused, and currently do not consider someone's financial circumstances by default.
- We propose three changes to the Mental Health Bill to ensure that people's finances are taken into consideration when they are in a mental health crisis, preventing further illness, reducing waiting lists, and helping people return to daily life, such as work.
- These include ensuring that care and treatment plans include a routine enquiry into the financial circumstances of every patient; that advance choice documents include financial matters as a specific section in the standard template format; and that Mental Health Crisis Breathing Space (MHCBS) is automatically offered to those detained under longer term sections of the Mental Health Act.
- This submission outlines the three amendments we called for, which were tabled by Lord Davies of Brixton. These were not accepted, but the government made commitments on each of them. We call on members of the Bill committee to reconfirm with the government that these commitments will be upheld and acted upon.

Who we are

The [Money and Mental Health Policy Institute](#) - the research charity set up by Martin Lewis (MoneySavingExpert) - is committed to breaking the link between financial difficulties and mental health problems. We have welcomed the introduction of the Mental Health Bill, and believe it offers a critical opportunity to ensure people experiencing a mental health crisis get the support they need to avoid financial harm.

The background

- Financial problems are a major contributor to people experiencing a mental health crisis, and can also make it much harder to recover from one. Last year nearly 21,000 people in England alone were struggling with problem debt while in hospital for their mental health, and an estimated 100,000 people in problem debt attempt suicide each year.
- The various tools that currently exist that help support people when they are in a mental health crisis, such as *Care and Treatment Plans* and *Advanced Choice*

Documents are underused, and currently do not consider someone's financial circumstances by default.

- Ensuring that people's finances are taken into consideration when they are in a mental health crisis will help to prevent further illness, reduce waiting lists and help people return to daily life, such as work. The aim is to ensure that these issues are proactively raised and systematically acted upon by healthcare professionals.
- Crucially, this is not about requiring healthcare professionals to support people with financial issues that they have neither the expertise or capacity to do. It is about empowering them to identify people in need and refer them to the appropriate, existing support.

Our recommendations for government

1. **Summary of amendment tabled: *Care and treatment plans (CTPs) should include a routine enquiry into the financial circumstances of every patient.***

This would take a lead from Wales, where this already exists, to ensure that there's a systematic routine enquiry into experiences of financial difficulty in place, so people can be directed to support if they need it.

Government commitment made in Lords:

[Baroness Merron agreed](#) that CTPs should include "interventions aimed at minimising financial harm." She told the Lords that the government plans to set this out in regulation rather than in primary legislation.

2. **Summary of amendment tabled: *Advance choice documents (ACDs) should include financial matters as a specific section in the standard template format.***

We welcome the Bill placing a duty on health commissioners to ensure that people are informed and supported to make an ACD. But we wanted to see the legislation go further and believe that the template for ACDs should include a specific section on money to help people have greater choice and control over their finances for when they are in a crisis.

Government commitment made in Lords:

[Baroness Merron confirmed](#) that the ACD template will include a prompt for financial matters and the code of practice will include guidance from professionals.

3. **Summary of amendment tabled: *Mental Health Crisis Breathing Space (MHCBS) should be automatically offered to those detained under longer term sections of the Mental Health Act.***

The Mental Health Crisis Breathing Space mechanism is another vital tool that can

protect people in a mental health crisis from the impacts of problem debt, by pausing enforcement action and contact from creditors, and freezing interest and charges on any debts. However, the numbers of people benefiting from the MHCBS are significantly below its potential, largely because both patients and healthcare professionals simply do not know about it. Ensuring that everyone detained under the longer provisions of the Act is automatically offered access to this scheme would ensure that many more people can benefit from it.

Government commitment made in Lords:

[Baroness Merron told the Lords](#) that the offer of Breathing Space will be included as an “explicit requirement” in the Act’s code of practice.