



Department
of Health &
Social Care

*From Baroness Merron
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for
Women's Health and Mental Health*

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Your Ref: TF174081
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Tim Farron MP
By email to: farront@parliament.uk

6 February 2026

Dear Tim,

Thank you for your correspondence of 19 December to Stephen Kinnock on behalf of your constituent Mr Timothy Nicholls about the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Mental Health Translational Research Collaboration (MH-TRC). I am responding as the Minister for Mental Health.

I appreciate Mr Nicholls' concerns.

We recognise the importance of the work being carried out by Mr Nicholls and the NIHR MH-TRC Mood Disorder Research Clinic Network in exploring novel interventions for treatment-resistant depression.

As Mr Nicholls will be aware, the Department funds research into treatment resistant depression via the NIHR, including through infrastructure projects such as the NIHR MH-TRC. NIHR infrastructure funding supports the country's leading experts to develop and deliver high-quality translational, clinical and applied research.

It is important to note that the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is an independent body that makes recommendations for the NHS on whether new medicines should be routinely funded by the NHS based on the evidence of their costs and benefits. These are very difficult decisions to make and NICE only publishes its final guidance after a very careful consideration of the evidence and extensive engagement with stakeholders.

The Government wants NHS patients to benefit from effective NHS treatments at a price that is fair to the NHS and the taxpayer. It is important that we have a system in place for making evidence-based decisions on whether new medicines should be routinely funded by the NHS, based on an assessment of their costs and benefits. Many patients have benefitted from access to effective new medicines as a result of NICE's important work.

Departmental officials regularly discuss a range of issues with colleagues from NICE, including in relation to the development of guidance on individual products.

I hope this reply is helpful.

All good wishes,

BARONESS MERRON