

## **Cabinet statement – Breathing Space phone line (13 February 2025)**

Good evening. I am here today to speak about changes to the provision of community mental health services.

I understand that the Integrated Care Board which covers Swindon Wiltshire and Bath North East Somerset has recommissioned contracts for community mental health services, and as a result there will be changes to the services that have been provided locally, including those provided by Bath MIND.

A resident in Moorlands, who I know through local projects, has shared her sadness and fear at termination of the Breathing Space Phone Line which provides support to people in crisis. The value of this service to her is that she can call and speak to people who can help her from home – which is essential when she feels she cannot leave the house due to anxiety or other health issues.

The contract for this evening crisis line is terminating on 31 March and will not be re-commissioned.

She has written a poem which describes what this service means to her which I would like to read:

A reflection,  
Of what I could be,  
Haunts me.  
I work towards it,  
and never reach it.  
Unendingly.

When this all gets  
Too much  
And I know: I'm,  
Not enough.  
Things are just:  
Tough.  
God is there in the rough.

But He also  
Gave me for this season,

People to guide me through.

To listen,

Plan a future,

With me in it.

And a reminder:

I am enough.

Thank you Breathing Space for always guiding me through.

In addition to the closure of the evening support line, Bath MIND has lost contracts for their Access and Intensive Outreach services which will move to another provider based in Bristol, with changes to operating hours.

I'm concerned that many vulnerable residents across our area will be facing uncertainty at the loss of, or changes to services that they have come to rely on.

The Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board covers a large geographical area (1,511 miles squared).

Whilst its intended outcomes are to reduce the variation in care – and standardise best practice – I am concerned that commissioning at this scale will mean a gradual degradation of local services.

I'm also concerned about the impact on charities like Bath MIND, its staff, and long-term sustainability.

I would like to ask specifically if Cabinet Members can do anything to prevent the loss of this evening support line, potentially by identifying other sources of funding?

More widely, what they can do to ensure this wider approach to commissioning services is not at the expense of valued local services?