

# A MANIFESTO FOR BETTER MENTAL HEALTH

MENTAL HEALTH POLICY GROUP –  
GENERAL ELECTION 2017



The Mental Health Policy Group

# FOREWORD

Mental health continues to rise up the agenda – more and more people are recognising the importance of good mental health in their own lives and the lives of friends and family.

In recent years, we have seen major policy changes at a national level with plans agreed to help more people to access treatment and support. The work of campaigns like Time to Change, Heads Together, and the voices of many thousands of people with lived experience of mental health problems have helped change attitudes for the better and tackle the stigma surrounding mental health.

But these developments have also drawn attention to just how far we still have to go. Two-thirds of people with a common mental health problem do not get the treatment they need from health services. Others receive too little, too late, slowing their recovery and damaging their life chances. Too many people are still losing their lives to suicide. People with mental illness are still more likely to be out of work or homeless than others. And day to day, many people still face routine discrimination and stigma.

As a nation, our progress on mental health is fragile. We need a long-term commitment to see through the changes that can deliver a society which openly acknowledges and accepts mental health problems, and services that people of all ages, from the youngest to the oldest, can truly rely on.

We call on all political parties in England to commit to bringing mental health to the heart of Government. This manifesto sets out four specific areas where significant improvement is needed.

- By 2030 there could be approximately 2 million more adults in the UK with mental health problems than there are today.
- People with schizophrenia die on average 15–20 years earlier than the rest of the population.
- 4,820 people lost their lives through suicide in England in 2015 – three quarters of these were men.



# ENSURE FAIR FUNDING FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Increasing numbers of people are in need of treatment and support for mental health problems. An estimated 1.8 million people were in contact with specialist NHS services in England during 2015/16, and we expect the number of people coming forward for help to continue to grow. By 2030, it is estimated that there could be approximately two million more adults in the UK with mental health problems than there are today. Mental health services must be equipped to respond to increasing demand and to tackle unmet need. To achieve this, we need to rebalance the health and social care budget to ensure mental health care for children and adults receives the level of investment it needs.

Mental health services have been historically underfunded compared to other areas of the health service. Over the course of the 2010 – 2015 Parliament, funding for NHS trusts to provide mental health services fell by 8.25 per cent in real terms. The good news is that, currently, there are plans to increase mental health funding up to 2020/21. By 2020/21, £1.28 billion more than in 2015/16 is pledged to be invested in mental health services for children and adults.

Work is needed to ensure funding is reaching services, but it is also absolutely vital that the next Government fulfils this important financial commitment.

Even then, there will be much more to do. Investment must continue throughout the next Parliament. As a minimum, there should be a commitment to continue to increase investment in NHS mental health services year on year throughout the rest of the next Parliament by £500 million annually. On this basis, in 2021/22 there would be an additional £1.78 billion compared to 2015/16, rising to an additional £2.28 billion in 2022/23. In our view, this is the minimum that will be required to ensure those in need of support, and particularly children and young people, can receive the help they need through the NHS.

Furthermore, there is a need to invest in public health and early intervention to help prevent mental health problems from occurring, escalating into crisis or becoming a life-long challenge. Investment in public health within local authorities is vital if we are to stem the rising human and financial costs of poor mental health. We call for a greater focus on prevention across all Government departments and fair funding for public health.

Social care is an essential element of mental health support, helping recovery and independence and preventing costly crises. Cuts to local authority budgets are limiting the scope of mental health social care, just as they are affecting public health provision. In turn, this is putting extra pressure on individuals, families and the NHS. We call on the Government to ensure fair funding and a sustainable future for mental health social care during the next Parliament. In addition, investment must be made to ensure mental health is appropriately supported in plans relating to criminal justice, education, housing and employment.



Mental health research receives less than 6 per cent of health research funding. Investment must focus on creating the greatest impact and ensuring that people who experience mental health problems and communities at greatest risk have a leadership role in mental health research. In order to build an evidence base for effective services and policies, we call on the next Government to commit to fair and equitable funding of mental health research.

## We call on the next Government to:



- ▶ Make a clear commitment to the investment plan associated with the Five Year Forward View for Mental Health covering the period to 2020/21
- ▶ To commit, beyond 2020/21, to ensure at least £500 million a year additional investment in NHS mental health services through until 2022/23 – securing £1.78 billion more than 2015/16 in 2021/22 and £2.28 billion in 2022/23
- ▶ Secure fair funding and a sustainable future for public health and mental health social care
- ▶ Deliver the 10-year mental health research strategy and commit to fair and equitable funding of mental health research

- ▶ Poor mental health carries an economic and social cost of £105 billion a year in England.
- ▶ The business cost of mental ill health among the UK workforce is £26 billion.
- ▶ Mental health accounts for 23 per cent of NHS activity but NHS spending on secondary mental health services is equivalent to just half of this.

# GIVE CHILDREN A GOOD START IN LIFE

Most children in the UK have good mental health, however one child in ten has a mental health problem and many more are at risk of a lifetime of ill health and disadvantage if not given early help.

Children with serious behavioural problems have the poorest life chances of any group of young people. Yet evidence-based parenting programmes can be highly cost-effective and can improve the wellbeing of the whole family as well as the life chances of their children. We call on the next Government to commit to invest, across the nation, in parenting programmes for families who need them.

Schools have a golden opportunity to protect and promote children's mental health at the same time as helping children attain good educational outcomes. Children with mental health problems can easily fall behind in school and the consequences of this are profound. The best chance of supporting schoolchildren's mental health is to take an evidence-based 'whole school approach' to mental health. This should include placing mental health on the curriculum in all schools, skilling up school staff to recognise difficulties early, taking effective action to tackle bullying and offering easy-access evidence-based mental health support, closely linked up with local NHS services, for children and young people in schools.

Over the next five years, investment in children and young people's mental health services is planned to increase the number of those with a mental health problem accessing treatment from 28 per cent in 2016, to a planned 35 per cent in 2020/21. This is welcome progress but clearly we have a long way to go before all children with mental health problems are getting the treatment and support they require. Beyond 2020/21, we need to ensure more children with mental health problems have access to the right services and to be investing accordingly.

We know that some children face bigger risks to their mental health than others. They include children living in prolonged poverty, children exposed to abuse and neglect, children with disabilities, children from some Black and Minority Ethnic communities and LGBT+ young people. And there is worrying evidence of a sharp rise in poor mental health among teenage girls and young women. The next Government should focus on supporting action to reduce inequalities in mental health during childhood and adolescence.



## We call on the next Government to:



- Help families through evidence-based parenting programmes
- Support all schools to protect and promote every child and young person's mental health
- Improve and speed up access to children's mental health services
- Commit to reducing inequalities in mental health outcomes among children and young people

- Around one in ten children aged between 5 and 16 years have a mental health problem, and many more have a high risk of poor mental health.
- 75 per cent of children and young people experiencing a mental health problem are thought to not be getting any help.
- Three-quarters of adults using mental health services first had a mental health difficulty before they were 18.
- Children with the most serious behavioural problems are 20 times as likely to end up in prison by the age of 30. Well-run parenting programmes can help them have a better start in life.

# IMPROVING HEALTH SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

We all rely on the NHS at times of crisis to provide us with the treatment and support we need. For far too long, people with mental health problems have suffered inadequate and inequitable care within our health services. While the number of people getting the help and support they need is increasing, only a third of people with common mental health problems currently have access to treatment and support, and even fewer get the full range of NICE-recommended treatments. One in ten people with psychosis receive no treatment at all. Of those who do, many do not receive the level of care NICE recommends. And we know that certain communities are even less likely to get access to treatment and support and too often experience poorer outcomes.

As a result, it is too often the case that people become more ill than they need, recover more slowly than is necessary, and die earlier than they should from preventable physical health problems, with the inevitable cost to human happiness, family life, jobs and the economy. And there is a growing recognition of these problems: this year, for the second year running, Healthwatch's analysis revealed mental health services to be top of the list of issues people in England want to see improved.

In 2015 the NHS agreed a five-year plan across the whole health system to start the long overdue process of bringing mental health care in England up to an acceptable standard. In January 2017, the Government accepted the 58 recommendations in the Five Year Forward View for Mental Health in full. If fully delivered, by 2021, this five-year plan should have:

- ◆ Reduced the number of people who die through suicide by 10 per cent
- ◆ Eliminated inappropriate out of area placements for care
- ◆ Increased focus on prevention to stop mental health problems before they start
- ◆ Provided a safe and speedy route to crisis care for people at their most unwell
- ◆ Increased access to perinatal mental health services
- ◆ Reduced premature mortality rates of people living with severe mental illness by improving the physical health of 280,000 more people living with mental health problems
- ◆ Reduced detentions under the Mental Health Act
- ◆ Introduced a set of access and waiting time requirements for evidence-based treatments to support people at the earliest opportunity not only when they reach crisis point
- ◆ Set a 10-year strategy for mental health research.



This is a necessary, overdue and realistic plan; but only if every part of the system, including Government, keeps their part of the bargain and is held accountable for fulfilling their commitments.

The Five Year Forward View for Mental Health is just the first step on the journey to ‘parity’ for mental health services. It will mean, for example, that by 2021 still only a quarter of people with common mental health problems will be able to access psychological therapies (up from the current 16.8 per cent). So we can’t stop there. By 2020 the Government and the NHS need to have agreed a plan for the following five years.

Better mental health care can only be delivered with the right number of staff with the right skills. The mental health workforce faces big challenges – including high levels of vacant posts in some areas and problems with recruitment. The next Government needs to ensure the delivery of a costed, multi-disciplinary workforce strategy, and support work to determine the shape of the mental health workforce beyond 2020/21. This should include commitments to give all medical students the chance to get experience in an appropriate psychiatry placement and to update medical school exit exams to better reflect the importance of mental health.

The Mental Health Act plays an important role in treating people when they are unwell if they pose a risk to themselves or others. It is of real concern that detentions have been rising year on year. The next Government should undertake a full review of the Mental Health Act, including identifying why increasing numbers of people are being detained each year, to ensure a Mental Health Act fit for tomorrow.

People from some Black and Minority Ethnic communities are less likely to receive appropriate mental health treatment and more likely to be detained under the Mental Health Act. It is vital we see a much greater focus at a national level in tackling these inequalities and ensuring everyone can access high quality, appropriate care and support.

The vast majority of prisoners have at least one significant mental health problem. Too many men and women end up in custody when what they need is help. The number of tragic deaths by suicide in our prisons rose to 116 last year. We call on the next Government to complete the national expansion of all-age liaison and diversion services to every police station and court in England, backed up with effective help for those who need it. And urgent action is needed to reduce the risk of suicide in our prisons.

Informal and formal carers play a vital role in enabling people who have experienced mental health problems to live well in the community and to advocate on their behalf. The next government should ensure that carers have the support they need to carry out this valuable role.

## We call on the next Government to



- Commit to the full implementation of the Five Year Forward View for Mental Health
- Commit to collecting and publishing data on progress against the Five Year Forward View recommendations
- Commit to planning improvements for mental health for the five years after April 2021
- Ensure a costed multi-disciplinary workforce strategy is published, and support work to determine the shape of the mental health workforce beyond 2020/21
- Undertake a full review of the Mental Health Act, to include identifying why the number of people being detained is increasing each year
- Commit to a greater focus on inequalities in mental health care, particularly for some Black and Minority Ethnic Groups
- Take action to improve mental health in prisons and complete the planned expansion of all age liaison and diversion services
- Develop a fully costed and funded suicide prevention strategy

- **The level of unmet need is high. Currently, just one-third of adults experiencing a common mental health problem receive treatment.**
- **People with mental illness are more likely to experience physical health problems, such as coronary heart disease and respiratory disease, and are at a higher risk of being overweight or obese.**
- **Use of the Mental Health Act has been growing by about 10 per cent a year since 2010/11.**

# BETTER LIVES FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

Having mental health problems doesn't just affect your health, but every aspect of your life. People tell us that while NHS services are vital, they also want to fulfil their ambitions of having a home, the chance to work in a positive workplace and living in a supportive community. Stigma and discrimination affect nine out of ten people with mental health problems, restricting working lives, curtailing social lives and relationships and leading to social isolation.

Time to Change, part-funded by Government and run jointly by Mind and Rethink Mental Illness, is England's world-leading evidence-based programme to challenge stigma and discrimination. Since its beginning in 2007 it has helped more and more people to be open about their mental health and live discrimination-free lives. The powerful voices of the younger members of the royal family have now joined the many voices of ordinary people in creating a social movement to bring mental health out of the shadows. As a society, we are on the cusp of transformation. But funding for Time to Change is not secure beyond 2021 and there is a danger that hard-won gains may be lost. We call on the next Government to commit to supporting Time to Change over its five-year term.

People with mental health problems often face huge practical challenges too, including finding housing and employment. Being without these essentials is a terrible additional burden on their mental health. But it doesn't have to be this way.

While people with mental illness can too easily lose their home when they become unwell, supported housing and the right benefits can play a crucial role in preventing homelessness and delayed discharges from hospital. The proposed Housing Benefit cap could worsen this picture. The next Government should ensure that benefits and housing policy enable everyone with a mental health problem to have a place to call home.

Too many people with mental health problems lose a good job and find it hard to get back into employment. But cost-effective employment support and a change in attitude and support from employers can help people with mental health problems stay in work, re-enter employment and build fulfilling careers. The next Government should support the ongoing Independent Mental Health and Employers Review and ensure people with mental health problems are offered evidence-based back to work support for those who want help getting a job. This should include expanding Individual Placement and Support to cover all mental health services and making employment specialists available to people using psychological therapy services.

Mental health problems impact many aspects of people's lives and many of the services Government provides. We believe it is vital that action across Government on mental health is appropriately joined up and makes the most of opportunities that exist across departments to improve the nation's mental health. For this reason, we also call on the next Government to create a cabinet-level ministerial post with specific responsibility for cross-departmental mental health.



## We call on the next Government to:



- Re-commit to reducing mental health stigma and discrimination by supporting Time to Change to sustain its work
- Ensure benefits and housing policy enables everyone with a mental health problem to have a place to call home.
- Support the ongoing Independent Mental Health and Employers Review and provide effective employment support to people with mental health problems who want help with work
- Create a cabinet level ministerial post with responsibility for mental health across Government.

- **Nearly nine out of ten people with a mental health problem say they have faced stigma or discrimination. Between 2007, when Time to Change began, and 2015, public attitudes towards mental health have improved by 8.3 per cent.**
- **Only about 40 per cent of people with a long-term mental illness are in employment. Many more would like the chance to work but often find it difficult to get the support they need to get or keep employment.**
- **Around 70 per cent of people accessing homelessness services have a mental health problem.**

# ABOUT THE MENTAL HEALTH POLICY GROUP

The Mental Health Policy Group consists of six national organisations working together to improve mental health: Centre for Mental Health, Mental Health Foundation, Mental Health Network, Mind, Rethink Mental Illness and the Royal College of Psychiatrists. This manifesto reflects areas of common concern of the six organisations.

Promoted by D Hamm on behalf of the Mental Health Policy Group,  
both of 89 Albert Embankment, Vauxhall, London SE1 7TP.

## The Mental Health Policy Group



Mental Health Foundation

