

Principles for mental health in the Long-Term NHS Plan

A Consensus Statement

December 2018

The Mental Health Policy Group is pleased to present the following Consensus Statement with partner organisations committed to improving the lives of people with mental health problems. Together we represent providers, professionals, the voluntary and community sector and hundreds of thousands of people who use the NHS and services in the wider community that support their mental health.

Mental health problems remain one of the largest single causes of disability in Englandⁱ affecting one in five mothers during pregnancy or in the first year after childbirth,ⁱⁱ one in eight children and young peopleⁱⁱⁱ and one in six adults.^{iv}

Mental health services have undergone significant transformation in recent years, primarily through the publication and roll-out of the *Five Year Forward View for Mental Health*^v, as well as a step-change in the priority given to mental health by politicians, health leaders and opinion formers. The Prime Minister's pledge to bring forward a long-term funding plan for the NHS is welcome^{vi} and comes at a time when mental health is high on the nation's agenda.

As health leaders set out their vision for the NHS over the next 10 years, we urge that it be underpinned and informed by the following seven principles.

1. The next decade must see real parity of esteem for mental health delivered

Over the next ten years this will mean that vastly more people living with a mental health condition will have access to high-quality treatment and support.

2. Mental health should be threaded throughout the Long-Term NHS Plan

In addition to significant investment in mental health services themselves, there are other priorities in the plan that will play a key role in improving support for people with mental health problems and tackling the factors which can cause or exacerbate these. This includes priority areas such as prevention, primary care, children and young people's health and support for people with multiple long-term conditions.

3. Improved mental health support is not just about the NHS

The Long-Term NHS Plan must be accompanied by a similar long-term cross-government strategy to effectively tackle the wider social determinants of poor mental health and enable all of us to enjoy mentally healthy lives from cradle to grave. This must include commitment to invest in public mental health initiatives and social care, and should bring about changes in education, social security, criminal justice and other public services to better support lifelong mental health.

4. 'Holistic' support is needed to help people of all ages manage both their physical and mental health.

This should include improved support for people to navigate the health and social care systems and other vital services such as housing and benefits, as well as better use of the voluntary and community sectors in reducing inequalities and marginalisation. It should also include a bigger role for co-produced services that are designed in partnership with the people who use them.

5. Ambitious pathways and waiting time standards are needed to ensure people with mental ill health receive the right treatment at the right time

This must be accompanied by improved data to ensure accountability.

6. A psychologically-informed workforce should be developed across all parts of the NHS, and is vital for providing a truly holistic, whole-person approach to all healthcare

Such a workforce should be able to support people's mental health whenever they require help, whichever part of the system they are in contact with and should also include support for NHS staff to manage their own health and wellbeing.

7. The disproportionately low levels of research funding for mental health should be addressed

We need a much greater focus on research to build the evidence base on existing treatments, effective prevention measures, detection and screening of mental health problems and the development of new treatments.

Our thanks go to everyone who contributed to a stakeholder roundtable discussion on the NHS 10-Year Plan in September 2018.

Signed,

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ⁱ Global Burden of Disease, measured as Years Lived with Disability (YLDs), age standardised per 100,000 population. Available from: <http://ghdx.healthdata.org/gbd-results-tool> [Accessed 20 November 2018].

ⁱⁱ Centre for Mental Health & LSE Personal Social Services Research Unit. *The costs of perinatal mental health problems*. 2015. Available from: http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/59885/1/_lse.ac.uk_storage_LIBRARY_Secondary_libfile_shared_repository_Content_Bauer%2C%20M_Bauer_Costs_perinatal_%20mental_2014_Bauer_Costs_perinatal_mental_2014_author.pdf [Accessed 20 November 2018].

ⁱⁱⁱ NHS Digital. *Mental Health of Children and Young People in England, 2017*. Available from: <https://files.digital.nhs.uk/F6/A5706C/MHCYP%202017%20Summary.pdf> [Accessed 22 November 2018].

^{iv} NHS Digital. *Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey: Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing, England, 2014*. 29 September 2016. Available from: <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/adult-psychiatric-morbidity-survey/adult-psychiatric-morbidity-survey-survey-of-mental-health-and-wellbeing-england-2014> [Accessed 11 September 2018].

^v NHS England. *Implementing the Five Year Forward View for Mental Health*. 2016. Available from: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/fyfv-mh.pdf> [Accessed 20 November 2018].

^{vi} Ipsos MORI. *NHS at 70: Public attitudes to the health and care system*. 11 May 2018. Available from: <https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/nhs-70-public-attitudes-health-and-care-system> [Accessed 20 November 2018].