

The Future Vision Coalition: future priorities

Key facts

- Mental health problems are common. One in four people experience mental health problems at some point in their lives.
- Many of the causes of mental health problems are socially determined, and many of the changes that can lead to better mental wellbeing and to recovery also lie in the wider social environment.
- Nine out of ten people affected by mental health problems report having experienced stigma and discrimination, for example in gaining employment, with friends and family, and in services such as health, welfare and justice.
- The economic costs of not investing in mental health are clear: mental ill health costs England over £77 billion every year.¹

Our policy priorities

A national public mental health strategy

We call for a robust public mental health strategy for England outlining the actions to be taken across government to help the whole population build resilience for times of stress, and targeting specific support for people at the highest risk of mental ill health.

Eradicating stigma

We call for government to commit to eradicating mental health stigma and to fund a national anti-stigma campaign building on Time to Change.

Early intervention

All public services should be able to offer the earliest possible help to people experiencing mental distress and their families. Teachers, GPs, employers and police officers, for example, should have the knowledge and skills to identify someone in distress and to help them to find the support they need.

¹ Sainsbury Centre, 2003, The Economic and Social Costs of Mental Illness, London: Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health (www.scmh.org.uk/publications/publications_list.aspx?SortID=d)

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidelines

We call for urgent action to ensure that treatments (most importantly psychological therapies) that have been recommended for the NHS are made universally available wherever people live. This should include the provision of appropriate support and information to carers. NICE public health guidance such as that on promoting mental wellbeing at work also needs to be comprehensively implemented.

Recovery

All mental health services should have as their primary aim helping people to get back the lives they want for themselves. Their role should be to offer assistance and support to people of all ages and backgrounds to attain their personal recovery goals, however long it takes. This should include support with accommodation, employment, education and personal life: whatever matters most to the person concerned and the people around them.

Transition services

We call for better support for people with mental health problems at critical times in their lives. People aged 14 to 25 need support tailored to their needs, not to fall into the gap between child and adult services. And we call for improved care for those moving from working age to older people services.

Employment

Everyone using community mental health services who is seeking paid work must be offered employment support based on the best evidence of what works. The Fit for Work scheme should be evaluated and its successful elements extended across the country to help people in work to keep their jobs. And employers should be supported and incentivised to recruit, support and retain people with an experience of mental health problems and to provide mentally health workplaces for all their staff.

Tackling inequality

There are wide inequalities in mental health between communities in England. Community engagement and joint local commissioning are vital for better prevention, treatment and support among communities with the highest rates of mental ill health. We call for sustained government support to narrow the mental health gap and ensure that all communities are actively engaged in the commissioning process.

Background

2009 was the final year of the National Service Framework for Mental Health, launched in 1999. As the Department of Health began to consult on what the next state of mental health policy in England should be, eleven leading organisations formed the Future Vision Coalition in order to contribute to the debate.

At the end of 2009, the Department of Health published *New Horizons*, a comprehensive programme of action for improving the mental wellbeing of the population and for reforming services for people with mental health problems and their carers and families by 2020. The Future Vision Coalition is now focused on building on this programme and ensuring that policy gets turned into action. This paper sets out our priorities for action to begin now to create the future to which we all aspire.