



Press Play on mental health



Making the changes your
constituents want to see

About Mind

We're Mind, the leading mental health charity for England and Wales. We won't give up until everyone experiencing a mental health problem gets both support and respect. We're campaigning to transform mental health services so that everyone gets the help they need, when they need it, and where they need it. And we're fighting to ensure everyone with a mental health problem has a stable source of income, a secure place to live, and where appropriate, the right help to get back into work, education or training.

Our network of 125 local Minds supported 396,000 people across England and Wales this year. Their services include talking therapies, crisis helplines, drop-in centres, employment and training schemes, counselling and befriending.

You can find advice and information on managing your mental health on our website: mind.org.uk/information

Time to press play on mental health

Mental health is one of the biggest domestic issues facing the new UK Government and Parliament. More people than ever are speaking out and demanding change, and as a nation our expectations for better mental health are higher than ever.

Momentum has been building over the last decade, and every generation now fully expects the UK Government to put the nation's mental health on an equal footing with physical health. We won't stand for anything less.


With Brexit dominating UK politics in recent years, people feel their lives have been put on pause, and promises to prioritise mental health broken. While there has been some progress, the reality is that in most parts of the country services are still poor and people lack the essential support that they need to stay well and fully participate in society.

Yet we know that change is possible; there are pockets of excellent practice that are making a

huge difference to the lives of people lucky enough to live in those areas. This ought to be the standard everywhere, and now is the time to redouble our efforts and deliver the mental health services and support that people rightly expect.

It is vital that the new UK government and Parliament put mental health at the very heart of its agenda. In this document we set out our priorities for change in the coming years, as well as the actions you can take in your role as an MP to help improve the experiences of all of us living with a mental health problem.

As an MP, you have a chance to transform the lives of people with mental health problems in your constituency and speaking out about mental health in Parliament can make a real difference.

 **Together, let's press play on mental health.**

Key issues for the new Parliament to address

▷ 1. Provide the right care, in the right place, at the right time

For too long, people with mental health problems have had to put up with poor services. Mental health services have faced decades of underfunding and neglect meaning that they are too often delivered in substandard and sometimes dangerous facilities. We know that people are reaching crisis point before they receive the help they need and even then, only two-thirds of people with common mental health problems are receiving the treatment or support that they need. These conditions unsurprisingly have led to the workforce feeling so demoralised that staff are leaving in droves.

We need your support in Parliament to ensure that the UK Government goes further to transform mental health services by:

- implementing all of the recommendations and funding commitments in the Five Year Forward View for Mental Health and the NHS England Long Term plan
- urgently investing in the mental health estate and workforce
- agreeing a sustainable funding solution for social care and for public health.

▷ 2. Modernise the Mental Health Act

Being sectioned under the Mental Health Act can be one of the most traumatic things for anyone experiencing a mental health problem. The 1983 Mental Health Act is out of date, discriminatory and in urgent need of reform. In 2018 an Independent review raised deep concerns about dignity, autonomy and human rights, as well as racial disparity in the way the Act is enforced, with Black African and Caribbean people disproportionately detained under the Act. We want the Act to stop focussing on what people are unable to do and instead empower people to have choice and control over their own care and recovery.

The Review recommended over 150 changes to the Act and wider mental health services and we need your support in Parliament to ensure that the UK Government commits to:

- delivering all of the recommendations in the Review and urgently bringing forward new world-leading mental health legislation, which MPs will play a crucial role in scrutinising.

Unfortunately we haven't moved forward. In fact we've gone backwards. This is the worst time in terms of my experience as a Black person to be vulnerable.

Colin

▷ 3. Address the growing crisis in young people's mental health

Half of all mental health problems have been established by the age of 14, rising to 75% by the age of 24. But neither the NHS in England nor schools are currently able to cope with the increasing numbers of young people needing support. The picture is bleak: only three in 10 young people with a mental health problem

were able to access specialist services last year, with those who do facing long waits and even longer journeys for treatment. Cuts to local authority budgets mean initiatives that boost young people's resilience and wellbeing, like youth services and community outreach workers, are disappearing.

We need your support in Parliament to ensure that the UK Government takes urgent action across three areas, with each requiring significant investment and accountability:

Crisis services

- Young people in crisis must be seen within four hours by appropriately trained staff, and no young person should have to travel out of area for crisis services.

Schools

- Our education system in England must be radically reframed so that wellbeing is placed on an equal footing to academic success, and young people with a mental health problem are supported to learn, develop and thrive.
- All teachers and support staff should receive training in mental health and wellbeing, ensuring that responsibility is shared across the whole school.

Community mental health services

- Children and young people who require specialist help should begin treatment within four weeks. The new UK government must honour the commitment to ensure that this becomes standard practice for every child who needs specialist help within the next decade, if not before.
- A single point of access, simple referral routes, and short waiting times are essential for good community services, as are services that are as close to home as possible.

4. Make the benefits system work for people with mental health problems

The current benefits system isn't working for people with mental health problems. People with mental health problems are simply not getting the support they need from the system, or being treated with respect. All too often, people are forced to jump through hoops to access support. This causes unnecessary stress and anxiety and leaves people trapped in poverty. That's why we need a system built around three key principles: treating people with dignity and respect, protecting people from poverty, and supporting people to live independently.

We need your support in Parliament to ensure that the UK Government commits to:

- ensure that no disabled people or people with health conditions are subject to sanctions
- independently regulate benefits assessments in a similar way to how schools and hospitals are regulated
- make sure that disabled people have the right to apply for long-term benefit awards
- set up a new independent commission to ask disabled people and independent experts to decide the questions for benefits assessments, to ensure they reflect the realities of their lives.

There is no culpability. There is no ownership. There is no: 'Yes we have made errors. Yes, we have made mistakes'.

Felicia

5. Promote and protect mental health at work

With mental health now the leading cause of sickness absence in the UK, it's never been more important for employers to look after the mental health of their staff. Some 300,000 people with long-term mental health problems fall out of work every year – equivalent to the population of Newcastle. Employers want to do more but are often unclear on their legal responsibilities and duties, and employees unaware of their rights. We think the UK Government needs to step in to clarify this for both employers and employees. The UK Government accepted the recommendations of 2017 Thriving at Work review of mental health in the workplace, but there are key areas from the review where very little progress has been made.

We need your support in Parliament to ensure that the UK Government commits to:

- deliver the changes set out in Thriving at Work to ensure employers do all they can to support mental health in the workplace
- clarify and extend the protections available to workers under the Equality Act 2010, so that people with mental health problems unequivocally receive the same rights as other disabled people
- radically reform the outdated Statutory Sick Pay model by increasing the rate, removing the wait for pay, enabling people to make a phased return to work, and ensuring the system works for low paid workers and self-employed people.

Knowing that I'll only be earning £90 to £95 a week on Statutory Sick Pay had a massive impact financially and on my mental health.

Allanah

6. Put mental health at the heart of UK Government policy

Good mental health is about so much more than good mental health services. To really improve the lives of people with mental health problems, and to reduce the number of people who become unwell in the first place, the new UK Government needs to look beyond the health services. Our mental health is affected by a huge range of things and it is up to the new UK Government to bring forward a coherent mental health strategy – and to take action against policies or practices that work against wellbeing and good mental health.

We need your support in Parliament to ensure that the UK Government commits to:

- drastically reduce the numbers of people who become unwell with mental health problems through a well thought-out prevention plan
- tackle inequalities, stigma and discrimination
- develop joined-up policy on social care, the welfare system, housing, and legal rights, so that the UK Government is working together to improve the lives of those of us with mental health problems.

Working together to press play on mental health

Delivering change in these areas will require your support as an MP. Below, we set out the ways in which you can help us transform the experiences of people with mental health problems.

What you can do

- **Make sure mental health is on the UK Government's agenda**

We can support you to ask Parliamentary Questions, schedule a debate to ensure the UK Government's work on mental health is rigorously scrutinised, building pressure for action. We can also support opportunities to table Private Members' Bills where we have seen significant progress made for mental health in recent years.

- **Meet with Mind**

We can share the relevant local mental health data on how mental health services are working in your area, talk through our upcoming campaigns, and discuss how you can help in Parliament.

- **Visit a local Mind**

Our network of 125 local Minds supported 395,000 people across England and Wales this year. Call us on 0208 215 2383 to find out if there's a local Mind in your area and to arrange a visit.

- **Be a local advocate for mental health**

You have an important role to play locally in understanding the experiences of people with mental health problems in your area. Take the time to visit local mental health services and meet with people with lived experience to hear their views on what's working and what needs to change.

- **Help us to tackle stigma by using the right language**

Nearly nine out of 10 people with a mental health problem say they have faced stigma or discrimination and this can restrict people's ability to work, curtail social lives and relationships, and lead to social isolation. It is therefore crucial that we challenge stigma of any type and ensure we use the right language when discussing mental health problems. Time to Change's helpful guide highlights the language we can use to ensure we are discussing mental health with dignity and respect:

time-to-change.org.uk/MindYourLanguage



Get in touch

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