



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 make sure 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 over 395,000 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's information pages – 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 UK people lack the essential support that they need to stay well and fully participate in society.

Most issues surrounding the funding and delivery of mental health services are devolved to the National Assembly for Wales, however many

decisions taken by MPs in Westminster directly impact on people with mental health problems in Wales. This includes policy areas such as welfare and benefits, employment rights and protections, and laws including the Mental Health Act.

It is vital that the new UK government and Parliament puts 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 transform the experiences of people with mental health problems.

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.

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

Key issues for the new Parliament to address

▷ 1. 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:

- making sure 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
- making sure that disabled people have the right to apply for long-term benefit awards
- setting 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

2. Modernise the Mental Health Act

Being sectioned is one of the most serious things that can happen to somebody experiencing a mental health problem and can have long-term effects for them. The Mental Health Act 1983 is the legislation in both Wales and England that sets out when people can be detained and treated in hospital for their mental health against their wishes. For years, Mind and others have argued that the way the Act is implemented, and the care that people receive under it, often fails to treat people with dignity and respect.

While health is devolved to the National Assembly for Wales, the Mental Health Act covers a number of areas that are the responsibility of the UK Government, such as policing and justice. And we have seen increasing numbers of people in Wales detained by police during a mental health crisis.

In 2018 the UK Government established an Independent Review which sought the views of thousands of patients affected by the Act across Wales and England. The Review highlighted deep concerns with the Act and recommended over 150 changes, including many to non-devolved areas. While we continue to campaign to reform mental health legislation in devolved areas we need to see the changes to non-devolved areas taken forward by the UK Government.

We need your support in Parliament to:

- ensure the UK Government delivers the changes to non-devolved areas recommended by the Independent Review which affect how the Mental Health Act operates in Wales.

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. 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:

- delivering the changes set out in Thriving at Work to ensure employers do all they can to support mental health in the workplace
- clarifying and extending 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
- radical reform of 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

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 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 You can also find further information on the Time to Change Wales website at Timetochangewales.org.uk



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