What can local authorities do?

The recommendations below build on the Implementation Framework's key actions for local authorities.

- **Appoint an elected member as ‘mental health champion.’** This role might include raising awareness of mental health issues, including the impact of stigma and discrimination, across the full range of the authority's work and with other elected members. It can also link to the work of the OSC and local Health and Wellbeing Board.

- **Assess how their strategies, commissioning decisions and directly provided services support and improve mental health and wellbeing.** Almost all areas of a local authority's responsibility have the potential to contribute to good mental health and wellbeing. Decisions about housing, planning, transport, leisure and green spaces and other community services all directly affect mental health.

- **Involve the local community, including those with mental health problems, their families and carers, in the co-production of service pathways and in service design:** This includes using a variety of engagement mechanisms beyond passive consultation techniques, for example proactive outreach to hard to reach groups, and providing accessible communication that clearly shows how people's views and priorities have been taken into account.
• **Consider using ‘whole place’ or community budgets** to improve the quality and efficiency of support offered to people with multiple needs who have a mental health problem.

• **Use the Local Government Association’s Knowledge Hub** - allowing members and staff to share innovative approaches and good practice around mental health.

• **Sign up to the Time to Change campaign** to raise the profile of mental health across the authority and address stigma among staff. Authorities can also develop local initiatives to make tackling stigma ‘business as usual’.

The framework also sets out specific actions for adult social services and for children’s services:

• **Use community care and carers assessments to identify ways to support independence and promote recovery**, including the needs of children of parents with mental health problems and carers.

• **Work alongside CCGs to remodel existing support to focus on early intervention, service integration, personalisation and recovery.** Reviewing eligibility thresholds for social care is crucial to this. Social services can also exert a major influence on the planning and delivery of mental health services, for example by joining up health, social care and housing support and by involving service users as equal partners in commissioning and monitoring services.

• **Provide access to individual budgets and direct payments for people with mental health problems**, and commission brokerage, advocacy and advice services to support people to use them.

• **Work alongside CCGs, schools and wider children’s services to focus on early intervention and integrated support.**

• **Offer evidence-based parenting interventions to families with children at risk of conduct disorder** and those experiencing behavioural problems. Effective parenting support also needs to include the development of effective referral routes and awareness-raising, for example with local GPs, schools, health visitors and other services working with young families.

• **Improve emotional support for looked after and adopted children and care leavers.** This can include establishing links with CAMHS to make appropriate referrals and offer integrated support, including support for adoptive parents of children with mental health problems. The children and young people’s IAPT programme should ensure that more children have timely access to evidence-based psychological therapies.

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**Facts and figures**

*Every year, at least one person in six experiences a mental health problem.* Depression and anxiety are the most common, affecting about half of the adult population at some point in their lives.

*Mental ill health costs some £105 billion each year in England alone.* This includes £21bn in health and social care costs and £29bn in losses to business from reduced productivity, sickness absence and unemployment.

*Half of all lifetime mental health problems emerge before the age of 14.* Early detection and treatment of mental ill health can dramatically reduce the duration, severity and loss of quality life associated with mental ill health.

*People with a severe mental illness die up to 20 years younger than their peers in the UK.* This is predominantly due to higher rates of poor physical health, for example related to smoking.

**Objectives from the strategy**

The Government’s mental health strategy for England, No Health Without Mental Health, set out six key objectives for better mental health and improved mental health care. The six objectives are:

**More people will have good mental health**

More people of all ages and backgrounds will have better wellbeing and good mental health. Fewer people will develop mental health problems – by starting well, developing well, working well, living well and ageing well.
More people with mental health problems will recover
More people who develop mental health problems will have a good quality of life – greater ability to manage their own lives, stronger social relationships, a greater sense of purpose, the skills they need for living and working, improved chances in education, better employment rates and a suitable and stable place to live.

More people with mental health problems will have good physical health
Fewer people with mental health problems will die prematurely, and more people with physical ill health will have better mental health.

More people will have a positive experience of care and support
Care and support, wherever it takes place, should offer access to timely, evidence-based interventions and approaches that give people the greatest choice and control over their own lives, in the least restrictive environment, and should ensure that people's human rights are protected.

Fewer people will suffer avoidable harm
People receiving care and support should have confidence that the services they use are of the highest quality and at least as safe as any other public service.

Fewer people will experience stigma and discrimination
Public understanding of mental health will improve and, as a result, negative attitudes and behaviours to people with mental health problems will decrease.

Supporting positive parenting
There is now clear evidence that a child's life chances are dramatically influenced by their relationships with their parents. Children with early onset behavioural problems have reduced life chances and those with the most severe forms of conduct disorder are 70 times more likely to end up in prison during their lives than those without (Fergusson et al., 2005). Highly cost-effective interventions exist to support positive parenting with children of all ages.

Birmingham City Council has invested in evidence based interventions in children's centres (Triple P) targeted towards those with the highest risk factors for poor outcomes, using the Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire to target children who need it most. In schools the City Council introduced the PATHS school based programme which again has been shown to produce positive results in terms of behaviour. They also survey every child's mental health and well being routinely as part of school activity.

Local leadership for mental health and wellbeing
In 2010 Dorset County Councillor Michael Bevan became the council's member champion for mental health. Cllr Bevan's role is to raise awareness of mental health issues in all areas of the authority's business and to improve links between the council and local health services. He works closely with local employers and with the Time to Change programme to tackle stigma and improve public understanding about mental health. He brought together around 140 local organisations to agree shared actions to improve mental health and the lives of people affected by mental illness in the county.

Implementing Recovery through organisational change
Recovery is a process through which people find ways of living meaningful lives with or without the ongoing symptoms of their condition. Helping someone to recover is not just about managing symptoms, it includes supporting people to gain or retain paid employment, having somewhere safe to live and developing supportive relationships with family. Recovery is about:

- **Hope**: ensuring that it is possible for people to pursue their personal goals and ambitions;
- **Control**: helping people to maintain a sense of control over their lives;
- **Opportunity**: supporting people to build their lives beyond mental illness.
Adult social care has a pivotal role to play in developing a Recovery orientation in mental health services. The Centre for Mental Health website contains resources to support mental health services to develop and assess their Recovery orientation: http://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/recovery/index.aspx.

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