Making things better in mental health services
an Easy Read guide to ‘No decision about us without us’
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What this guide is about

The government wrote a strategy about mental health. A strategy is a plan that says what you are going to do to sort things out.

The plan says 6 things the government want to do to make things better in mental health.

The 6 things are to make sure

1. More people have good mental health.
2. More people with mental health problems get better.
3. More people with mental health problems have good physical health.
4. More people get good help and support that works for them.
5. Less people with mental health problems have a bad time.
6. Less people with mental health problems are treated in an unfair way.

We think this plan is a good thing. We think more needs to happen if the plan is going to work.

Some organisations are not clear about what they need to do. We want to help with this.
The mental health framework

We have written a framework to make it easier for people in charge to follow the plan. The new framework has been written by the government and mental health groups.

The framework says what actions different services need to take to make things better in mental health. This includes other types of services, not just mental health services.

The plan is there to help everyone. This means people who

- work in mental health
- people who need support for mental health

Mental health is just as important as physical health. This framework is the plan to make this happen.

How you can help with the framework

You are the best people to know what is happening in mental health where you live. We want you to help make the framework happen. You can do this by

- reading this guide so you know about the framework and how to tell people about it
- tell other people about the framework so that they can see what they should do
- get other groups to take part to make things better in mental health
- send the framework to other people. For example, you could send it your local MP. Your local MP represents your area in Parliament, and wants to make sure everyone is supported.

We need people to support the framework and say it is a good plan for making all kinds of services better at helping mental health. The framework is on the government’s website here:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/2012/07/mentalhealthframework/

Who the guide is for

This guide is to help people get the best mental health services they can. The guide is for:

People who need support for their mental health

Community groups – community means the area and the people where you live
What is in the guide

The guide will tell you

• about the government plan for mental health

• who decides things to do with mental health services where you live

• how you can take part in things to do with mental health and how you can change things

The world of mental health

The world of mental health is changing. The way things are decided is going to be different. A lot of these changes are because the government made a new law.

This law is called the **Health and Social Care Act**. **Health and social care** means things to do with your health and how you are cared for.

Some of the changes are

**Local Boards** are being set up with people in charge of different types of services to plan how to help physical and mental health.

Everything to do with **health and social care** is going to happen at a local level. The government will check how mental health is being supported in the local area.

New groups of doctors will decide what mental health services should be in your area. These groups of doctors are called **Clinical Commissioning Groups**. You might hear people call them **CCGs** for short.
Taking part in things

The groups in charge of health and social care need you to have your say. Taking part in things is very important. Having your say in what goes on in mental health is part of the new framework.

The framework tells different organisations what they can do to help people say what mental health support should be in the area

- **clinical commissioning groups** – these are groups of doctors who choose what mental health services will be in your area
- **mental health services**
- **primary care services** – this means your GP and nurses you see at your local surgery
- **health and well being boards**
- **health scrutiny committees** – these are groups that check everything is being done in the right way

The government want everyone to get a chance to have their say in what is happening in mental health services.
What should be in local plans

Local authorities and other health organisations need to work together. They need to find out what is going on now and what local people want from the services.

The government calls this local working together plan a joint strategy. They want the people in charge of mental health services to work with the local community. The local community means where you live and the people in your area.

It is the law that the local community is asked what they think about the plans. This has not always happened in things to do with mental health. The new framework will help to change this.

Some GPs are already doing this with their patients in groups. They ask the patients to take part in things and have their say.

Your family, friends and carers will be able to take part in things too.

Working together to deliver services

People who use mental health services and their carers might be asked to take part more in things. This could be saying what services there should be and how they should be run. It could even be helping to run the service. Working together like this is called co-production.

You might work together with the people who decide things to do with mental health services like commissioners.
NHS Trusts

NHS Mental Health Trusts are the organisations in charge of running mental health services. Most of them are Foundation Trusts which have members. You might want to be a member of the Trust. This means you can have more of a say in what happens. For example, you can

- have a say in how physical and mental health services can work together
- be a governor or say another person that would be good to be one – a governor is someone who checks everything is working well and gives advice

Being a volunteer

A volunteer is someone who gives up their time to help other people. There are lots of things you can do in the community to help with mental health services.
Networks

In 2013, new networks of people who work in mental health will happen. They will work together to think of good ideas for mental health in that part of the country. People who use mental health services will be able to tell the networks any ideas they have.

There will also be a network of people who use health services called Healthwatch. In each local area there will be a Local Healthwatch. They will say what should be done better in your local area. You can talk to them about the things that are important to you.

Making changes in mental health services

There might be things happening that you want to change. For example, some services might not be meeting your needs. Making changes to the way things happen in mental health can happen in different ways. The framework has ideas about how services can be better.

Getting the message across

Getting the message across about mental health and things you want to change is very important. Here are some of the ways you can do this.
Campaigns

You could run a local campaign – a local campaign is when you say what you want to happen to make a change in the area where you live.

For example, you might get in touch with your local MP and tell them about your campaign. Your MP might be able to make a difference to what happens in services if they join the campaign. You can write to them or send them an email.

You can get in touch with your local councillor too. They have to make sure that local money is spent on services which really help people. You can find out more about this on your local council website.

You need to make your case for changing things as strong as you can. The framework can help you do this.

You can get advice on how to set up a campaign from charities like Mind and Rethink Mental Illness.

You can share your thoughts and what you think in different ways. For example, you could do this on the Patient Opinion website at

www.patientopinion.org.uk
Making a complaint

Making a complaint is the first step in trying to change things. If something bad has happened to you as part of a mental health service then you can make a complaint. If you are not happy with what happens to your complaint then you can go to the government.

Getting to know other people who can help

Getting to know other people who can help is a good way to get things started. There are lots of different groups to do with mental health that can help.

Asking people to sign a petition

A petition is when you think something is not right and you ask other people to sign a paper to say this. If lots of people sign the petition it can make a real difference.

Using the media

The media means newspapers, radio and television. If you have a good story about mental health then they might tell other people about it for you. This will help get your message across.

You can use social media on the internet like Facebook and Twitter.

If you do not have the internet at home then you can go to the library and use it there. You can ask your family, friends, carer or support worker to help you.
Starting your own group

You could start your own group to change things. This could be a lot of work but it could make a real difference to how things happen in mental health services.

There are groups and charities that can give you support to do this.

Influencing – making a difference to change the way things happen

Here are some ways you can help to make a difference to change the way things happen. This is called influencing. You can influence by

- making it clear what you are trying to do
- keeping a record of everything you do
- getting to know a bit more about the person like an MP that you want to meet or tell things to
- working together with other people who believe in the same things as you
- having good information to support what you are doing
- making sure you do the right things at the right time
- trying not to make things personal – be true to what you believe in and what you think should change
- standing firm on the things you believe in – if you are not sure about something you can always go away and think about it
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Places to go to find out more

The Afiya Trust

The Afiya Trust supports national and local groups to do with health and social care for Black and Minority Ethnic people.

You can get in touch with them by

Post 27-29 Vauxhall Grove
London
SW8 1SY

Website www.afiya-trust.org

Email info@afiya-trust.org

Telephone 0207 582 0400

Mind

Mind is the mental health charity for England and Wales. Mind make sure that everyone with a mental health problem gets support and respect. They work with other groups to make this happen.

You can get in touch with them by

Post 15-19 Broadway
Stratford
E15 4BQ

Website www.mind.org.uk

Email action@mind.org
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National Survivor User Network

The National Survivor User Network is run by service users to help people with mental health issues get together and make a difference. The network runs different events and helps people to learn new things.

You can get in touch with them by

Post 27-29 Vauxhall Grove
       Vauxhall
       London
       SW8 1SY

Website www.nsun.org.uk

Email info@nsum.org.uk

Telephone 0207 820 8982

Rethink Mental Illness

Rethink Mental Illness is a charity that believes people with mental illness can have a better life. We help people support each other. We run services and support groups across England. We want to change what people think about mental illness.

You can get in touch with them by

Post 89, Albert Embankment
      London
      SE1 7TP

Website www.rethink.org

Email info@rethink.org

Telephone 0300 500 0927
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Thank you to Raincharm for the words

www.raincharm.co.uk

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www.photosymbols.com

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www.epigram.co.uk