



Care for mental health campaign

Mental health social care is a vital and overlooked aspect of social care in the UK. Without significant reform to the delivery of its services and investment in local authority budgets, the enormous benefits it brings to people severely affected by mental illness across the county could be lost.

What is mental health social care?

Mental health social care plays a vital role in supporting people living with severe mental illness to recover following hospital care, stay well and prevent further crises. **Without long term funding, estimated in 2018 at £1.1 billion per annumⁱ**, significant pressure will continue to be placed on expensive NHS emergency and inpatient services, alongside continued missed Government targets such as ending out of area placements. The situation has become even more acute in the midst of increased needs due to the Covid-19 pandemicⁱⁱ.

Mental health social care must be at the centre of Government plans for social care reform with appropriate funding to ensure the provision of the services local authorities have a duty to provide under the Care Act 2014, Mental Health Act and Mental Capacity Act.

Why does this matter now?

The NHS Long term plan committed nearly £1 billion every year for the next three years for the NHS to transform [community mental health care](#) for adults and older adults. Its vision is for a “radical change in the design of community mental health care by moving away from siloed, hard-to-reach services towards joined up care and whole population approaches, and establishing a revitalised purpose and identity for community mental health services”ⁱⁱⁱ. **Yet this is juxtaposed with local authorities making significant cutbacks^{iv} to mental health social care over this same period. The NHS mental health funding taps are on, but the plug is missing.**

What are the solutions?

The Government must commit to **reforming the social care sector in a way that will address issues for working age adults, not just older people**. This includes those living with physical and learning disabilities, and people severely affected by mental illness.

The Health and Care Bill

The Health and Care Bill White Paper focuses on the integration of health and care. There is recognition that neither the health system nor local authorities can meet the health needs of their populations alone. It seeks to embed joint working by making Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) statutory, and both the NHS and local authorities will be given a duty to collaborate with each other, which will replace existing collaboration duties.

The proposals are centred in a population health approach. The Government hopes that by removing legislative barriers, the scene will be set for different parts of the system to come together and take bold, collaborative action to serve that population. Whilst we are supportive of the intent, we are concerned that in a number of key areas, the proposals either fail to reflect or do not go far enough in making integrated, person-centred care a reality. **We would like the Health and Care bill to include commitment to integrated social care reform with a sufficient financial settlement. Without this, the Bill will not enable sufficient integration between health and social care.**

Funding

DHSC's Mental Health and Wellbeing Advisory Group made a number of recommendations last year. One of these was that the **'restoration of mental health related adult social care budgets to 2010/11 levels is a priority. Estimated at an additional £1.1 billion per annum'**. The Government committed to review to the group's recommendations, but no response has been published to date.

How can you help?

- Sign up to [become a campaigner](#) to receive all the latest updates on this and other Rethink Mental Illness campaigns

Further information

For further information please contact the campaigns teams at campaigns@rethink.org

ⁱ IPPR, *Fair funding for mental health: Putting parity into practice*, October 2018

ⁱⁱ Health Service Journal, *Exclusive: Key NHS long-term plan target to be missed 'due to covid'*, February 2021

ⁱⁱⁱ NHS England and NHS Improvement, *The community mental health framework for adults and older adults*, September 2019

^{iv} National Audit Office, *The adult social care market in England*, March 2021,

<https://www.communitycare.co.uk/2021/03/11/budget-cuts-planned-social-care-councils-count-cost-pandemic-public-spending-watchdog-finds/>

'We're being impoverished': how English councils have cut care during the pandemic,

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/jan/06/were-being-impoverished-how-english-councils-have-cut-care-during-the-pandemic>, 6 January 2021