Ten questions for your council

1. How many people in your locality have different mental health conditions?

Across the UK, about 23% of the adult population, and 10% of children and adolescents have a mental health condition each year. For adults, 17% have a depression or anxiety condition, 0.4% have psychosis (such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder), 6% are dependent on alcohol, 3% on illegal drugs, 4.4% have personality disorders, 6.4% have an eating disorder and 5% of adults over 65 have dementia. For children and adolescents, 6% have conduct disorder, 4% emotional disorder, 3.5% have ADHD and 1% have less common conditions such as autism. However, rates can vary threefold depending on where you live and other factors. Therefore, it’s important to know how many people have different mental health conditions in your area to effectively plan services.

2. How many people from particular groups are affected?

Certain groups are several times more likely to have mental health conditions. For instance, people from certain ethnic groups, homeless people and looked after children. Therefore, it’s important to know how many people there are from such groups and the proportion likely to experience mental health conditions.

3. How many people with mental health conditions receive timely treatment?

Only a minority of people with mental health conditions receive any treatment. Many of those who do ask for help have to wait months and often years for cost-effective treatment. Quick access to good quality treatment is vital to prevent these conditions from escalating and affecting a person’s work, education, home and family life. The government’s mental health strategy (No health without mental health) also highlights a range of treatments which result in economic savings even in the short term which enable local estimation of such savings.

4. How many of people with mental health conditions receive support for their physical health such as to stop smoking?

People with mental health conditions die 10-20 years earlier than those without mainly due to much higher rates of health risk behaviour and associated physical illness. For instance, smoking is the single largest cause of premature death yet 42% of all tobacco smoked in England is by people with a mental health condition. Although smokers with mental health conditions have the same rates of wanting to quit as others and smoking cessation is as effective for this group, they are less likely to receive support to address smoking or other health risk behaviour and physical health conditions. Therefore, it is important to know how your locality is doing on such issues.
one person in 10 who uses mental health services is in any paid employment.

What is the local annual spend on the treatment and prevention of mental health conditions as well as the promotion of mental wellbeing?

While the majority of people with mental health conditions in most areas receive no treatment, spend on treatment varies widely. Spending on mental disorder prevention and mental health promotion similarly varies although it is usually minimal.

What is the local annual cost of mental health conditions?

In England, mental health conditions result in annual costs of £105bn which occur across a broad range of areas. Lack of provision of cost effective interventions to treat, prevent and promote result in significant local costs even in the short term - it is possible to estimate the cost in your area.

For more information

Recent public mental health commissioning guidance published by the Joint Commissioning Panel at www.jcpmh.info/resource/guidance-for-commissioning-public-mental-health-services/ provides a template of what mental health issues should be covered in a JSNA to enable this.

More resources to support member champions can be found at www.mentalhealthchallenge.org.uk. For regular updates follow us on Twitter @MH_challenge.

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Endorsed by:

RCGP Royal College of General Practitioners
RSPH Royal Society for Public Health

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