



**We're in!**

*The mental health challenge*

Local councils championing mental health

# Ten questions for your council

Almost one in four of us experiences a mental health condition each year which can affect people of all ages and have a devastating effect on our lives. Yet these conditions can often be prevented, and treating them quickly can reduce the wide ranging impacts and associated economic costs.

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) provides a systematic description of the current health and wellbeing status of local population, including current and future unmet needs and health inequalities. The JSNA informs the local Health & Wellbeing Board's strategy and commissioning priorities for health, public health and social care. However, there is huge variation in how well mental health is covered in JSNAs. This can result in wide variation in the proportion of people receiving appropriate mental health interventions.

This briefing provides mental health member champions with ten questions for your local authority and public health service to ensure that relevant mental health information is included in the JSNA to support what is being done to promote good mental health and to prevent and treat mental health conditions in your locality.

## **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 three fold 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.

## 5 What is the local level of mental wellbeing?

Mental wellbeing is not simply the absence of a mental health condition and has broad range of important impacts. These include boosting resilience to life's adverse events and reducing the risk of developing mental health conditions. It is important to identify the local level of wellbeing including among groups at risk of lower levels of wellbeing such as those with mental health conditions.

## 6 What is the local level of protective factors for mental wellbeing?

A range of factors are important to promote wellbeing so it is important to know what the local levels of such factors are. Every community has assets that can help to promote mental wellbeing such as community organisations and faith groups.

## 7 What is the local level of risk factors for mental health conditions and poor wellbeing?

Risk factors for mental health conditions and poor wellbeing include socioeconomic deprivation, unemployment, job insecurity, housing insecurity, domestic violence, debt, fear of crime and isolation. Therefore, it is important to understand the local level of such factors to inform strategic decisions about how to prevent mental health conditions and poor wellbeing in the local population.

## 8 How many local people receive interventions to prevent mental health conditions and promote mental wellbeing?

Good evidence exists about effective interventions to promote our mental health and prevent mental health conditions. Many of these interventions promote protective factors and address risk factors identified in 7. Furthermore, the mental health strategy highlights how such interventions also result in economic savings both in health and a range of other areas even in the short term which enables local estimation of such savings. It is important to know how many people receive such interventions including for groups are higher risk. For instance, good employment is an important protective factor for mental wellbeing including for people recovering from mental health conditions although fewer than

one person in 10 who uses mental health services is in any paid employment.

## 9 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.

## 10 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/](http://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](http://www.mentalhealthchallenge.org.uk). For regular updates follow us on Twitter @MH\_challenge.

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