



The Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer
The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

11 November 2024

Dear Prime Minister,

We write to you as a group of mental health charities with concerns about the worsening state of our country's mental health. The declining mental health of the nation should not be inevitable. Unless we act now, we risk overseeing further damaging decline in the nation's mental health and leaving behind a generation.

Your government has an ambitious – and welcome – mission to build an NHS fit for the future. We believe this is possible, and we are keen to engage with you further as you develop your 10-Year Health Plan. However, we believe you risk undermining your ability to deliver your health and growth missions without addressing the increasing scale and severity of mental health need.

Even though 1 in 4 of us will experience a mental health problem each year, too many of us aren't able to access the help we need. We now have over 2 million people on the waiting list for NHS mental health support in England, waits which will only lead to individuals getting more unwell and more likely to require crisis interventions, placing additional strain on already stretched services.

Growing numbers of children and young people now have a mental health problem – 1 in 5 compared to 1 in 9 in 2017 – yet only a third last year were able to access treatment. At the same time, stigma and discrimination remain huge barriers for people with a mental health problem, with signs that things are getting worse following improvements in attitudes to mental health.

The effects of this are profound. People with a mental health problem are less likely to be in paid employment than those without, earning an average of £8,400 less a year. Shockingly, people with a severe mental illness have a reduced life expectancy of 15-20 years compared to the general population. Without urgent action we risk leaving many more facing this reality.

Living with a mental health problem often cuts across multiple areas of somebody's life. – from healthcare and education, to benefits and employment, relationships and identity. Social factors such as an adequate income, stable work and secure housing are also vital in helping people to maintain good mental health

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 MindCharity

**We are Mind. We're here to fight for mental health
and to make sure that everyone gets the support
and respect that they deserve.**

mind.org.uk/privacy

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The Autumn Budget and the Mental Health Bill showed glimmers of hope – but we will only be able to tackle the challenges within mental health by taking a wide-ranging and holistic approach. That’s why we need a cross-government mental health plan in England that puts prevention at its heart and incorporates the role of all departments in protecting the nation’s mental health, with a fair share of the additional NHS funding promised.

We stand ready to work with you to change this – but this will require the Government to provide the leadership, vision and investment needed to create a mentally healthier nation that leaves no one behind.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss these issues further.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Sarah Hughes, Chief Executive – Mind

Sheridan Hammond, Chair – Mind’s Federation Leadership Group (representing federated local Minds across England, Wales and the Channel Islands)

Andy Bell, Chief Executive – Centre for Mental Health

Mark Winstanley, Chief Executive – Rethink Mental Illness

Brian Dow, Chief Executive – Mental Health UK

Mark Rowland, Chief Executive – Mental Health Foundation

Laura Bunt, Chief Executive - Young Minds

Daniel Carmel-Brown, Chief Executive – Jewish Care (Jami)

Sabah Gilani OBE, Director – Muslim Mind Collective

Charlotte Rainer, Coalition Manager - Children and Young People’s Mental Health Coalition

The Black Mental Health and Wellbeing Alliance

Simon Gunning, Chief Executive – CALM

Julie Bentley, Chief Executive – Samaritans

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