

Foreword

The *Five Year Forward View for Mental Health* has made an unarguable case for transforming mental health care in England. The costs of mental ill health – whether to the individual, their family or carer, the NHS or wider society – are stark. The opportunity of action cannot be ignored, and this document describes how we will take the action required.

Over the past thirty years, mental health services have undergone a radical transformation, and in many areas have gone further in developing multi-disciplinary, community-based alternatives to hospital than any other part of the health system. This should provide the platform needed to build the fuller vision of the *Five Year Forward View for Mental Health* and embed lasting change.

People can, and do, recover from mental ill health. The evidence is clear that improving outcomes for people with mental health problems supports them to achieve greater wellbeing, build resilience and independence and optimise life chances, as well as reducing premature mortality.

But moreover, the evidence is equally clear on the potential gain for the NHS and wider public sector from intervening earlier, investing in effective, evidence-based care, and integrating the care of people's mental and physical health. The case for the *Five Year Forward View for Mental Health*, therefore, is about moving beyond the moral imperative and the clear clinical and individual benefits, and recognising this as a financial necessity to manage the challenges of the years ahead. The implementation plan set out in this document is for the whole NHS, not just for the mental health sector.

Sustainability and transformation plans (STPs) provide the local vehicle for strategic planning, implementation at scale and collaboration between partners. Implementing the commitments of this plan will improve access and outcomes, deliver seven-day services, reduce inequality and realise efficiencies across the local health and care economy and wider society. Mental health should be an intrinsic element of every STP – threaded throughout and not an afterthought.

Implementing this plan will benefit people of all ages, reflecting the specific needs of all groups from children and young people through to older people. As such, our aim to improve mental health and wellbeing cannot solely be achieved by the NHS, but must be delivered in partnership with other local organisations including local government, housing, education, employment and the voluntary sector.

This document lays out a roadmap for delivering the commitments made in the *Five Year Forward View for Mental Health* to people who use services and the public. When implemented, this will lead to an additional one million people receiving high-quality care by 2020/21: a decisive and unprecedented step towards closing the treatment gap for mental health.

Delivering this scale of ambition will be challenging for many; but we must deliver it, and we must be able to show transparently the difference this has made for people. As well as outlining the expectations of the NHS and others, this implementation plan sets out how national partners will work together to provide the right enabling structures and frameworks and to demonstrate progress, as well as the support we will offer collectively to localities over the coming years.

It is now up to all of us to make this a reality.



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