

Centre for
Mental Health



Tackling inequalities in mental health

Andy Bell, 28 January 2020

@Andy__Bell__ @CentreforMH @EquallyWellUK

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The overlap between long-term conditions and mental health problems

Introduction

There is a wealth of evidence about the potential for prevention to reduce both physical and mental health. We know more than ever about the things that get you unwell: health is not just what you eat, drink and do, but also the things that you think and feel. And we know that interventions designed to promote good mental health and prevent mental health problems can be effective. This briefing summarises the key points about prevention activity for a long time, but also the things that you think and feel. And we know that interventions designed to promote good mental health and prevent mental health problems can be effective. This briefing summarises the key points about prevention activity for a long time, but also the things that you think and feel.



We're in!

The mental health challenge

Local councils championing mental health

Equally Well UK



Long term conditions:
30% of population of England
(approx. 15.4m people)

Mental health problems:
20% of the population of England
(approx. 10.2m people)

30% of people with a

46% of people with a mental health problem have a

Risk factors for poor mental health

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- ❑ Violence, neglect and abuse
- ❑ Bullying (at any time in life)
- ❑ Poverty (particularly relative poverty and inequality)
- ❑ Discrimination
- ❑ Homelessness and housing insecurity
- ❑ Exclusion and isolation
- ❑ Injustice

Unequal risks for poor mental health (1)

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- ❑ Children from the poorest 20% of households are four times as likely as wealthiest 20% to have mental health difficulties by the age of 11
- ❑ Children and young people with a learning disability are three times more likely than average to have a mental health problem
- ❑ Adults from African-Caribbean communities in the UK have higher rates of post-traumatic stress disorder and suicide risk & more likely to be diagnosed with schizophrenia

Unequal risks for poor mental health (2)

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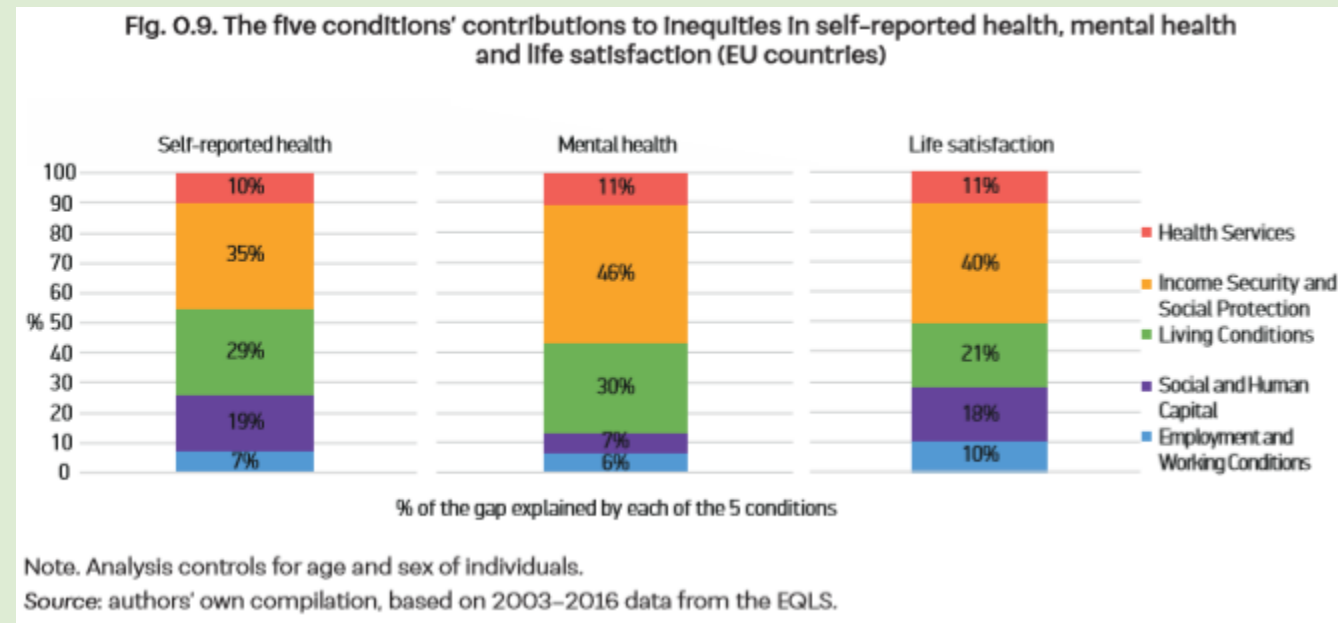
- ❑ 70% of children and 80% of adults with autism have at least one mental health condition
- ❑ Women are ten times as likely as men to have experienced extensive physical and sexual abuse during their lives
- ❑ Deaf people are twice as likely to experience mental health difficulties
- ❑ People who identify as LGBT+ have higher rates of common mental health problems and lower wellbeing than heterosexual people

The importance of wealth and income

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- Mental health inequality is particularly affected by economic inequality (WHO)



A Vision for Prevention

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- **Action to promote positive mental health and prevent poor mental health:** implementing at scale evidence-based interventions that can improve people's mental health
- **Action to reduce inequalities:** social and economic inequality drive poor mental health so we need action to reduce or mitigate this.
- **Action to tackle the emotional and psychological causes of poor health:** for example the impact of poor mental wellbeing on smoking, diet and alcohol misuse.

A Vision for Prevention

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- **Action to prevent physical health problems leading to poor mental health:** people with a long-term physical illness have twice the risk of common mental health problems.
- **Action to prevent people with a mental health problem dying young:** having a mental illness shortens life expectancy by some 15-20 years.
- **Action to prevent loss of life through suicide:** including in communities, in primary care and mental health services

Mental and physical health

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The overlap between long-term conditions and mental health problems



Mental health and long-term conditions

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- Having a long-term illness doubles risk of poor mental health
- Mental health difficulties exacerbate physical conditions and increase NHS costs 45%
- NHS now extending psychological therapy services to people with long-term conditions
- Collaborative care models hold greatest promise for complex needs

Physical & mental health: 'stolen years'

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- ❑ Life expectancy for someone with long-term mental illness 15-20 years shorter
- ❑ High rates of physical ill health (eg diabetes, heart disease) & smoking
- ❑ Low rates of cancer screening & high mortality after diagnosis



- ❑ Collaborative to spur concerted collective action on physical health
- ❑ Charter for Equal Health
- ❑ Three principles:
 1. We all have a *right* to good health
 2. Achieving equal health is a whole system task
 3. The answers lie in collaboration and coproduction

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Employment

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- ❑ Being in paid work benefits mental health (and can maximise income)
- ❑ Individual Placement and Support (IPS) works better than any alternative approach to employment support
- ❑ NHS Long Term Plan signals further expansion of IPS in mental health services

IPS principles

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- ❑ No exclusions
- ❑ No compulsion
- ❑ Rapid, assertive job search based on preference
- ❑ Co-located with health support
- ❑ Benefits advice
- ❑ Time unlimited support in work

Housing, finance and welfare rights

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- ❑ People with mental health problems **three times** as likely to be in debt
- ❑ 44% of young adults with mental health problem have welfare needs (16% without)
- ❑ Poorer mental health = more welfare rights problems (and vice versa)
- ❑ At least 60% homeless people have a mental health problem

Housing and welfare solutions

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- ❑ High quality welfare advice should be embedded in **all** primary care and mental health services
- ❑ Range of housing support provision needed to enable people to maintain homes and reduce hospital stays
- ❑ Housing First approaches show greatest promise, especially for homeless people with complex needs

The mental health challenge

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- ❑ Elected member champions for mental health in 100+ local councils
- ❑ Raising awareness & tackling stigma
- ❑ Working with local communities
- ❑ Putting mental health in all policies
- ❑ Supporting workplace mental health
- ❑ Scrutinising policy & delivery



We're in!

The mental health challenge

Local councils championing mental health

Mental health and criminal justice

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- 90% of prisoners have one or more mental health problem
- Estimated 23% would meet threshold for secondary mental health care
- 92 'self-inflicted deaths' in 2018 and more than 52,000 self-harm incidents
- 7% prisoners have a marked learning disability and 25% learning difficulty
- 47% adult prisoners have a traumatic brain injury (30% have five or more)

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- ❑ Most of England now has a Liaison & Diversion service in police stations and courts, all working to national model
- ❑ All prisons have a mental health service: but they see about 1/4 of people who need them
- ❑ Mental Health Treatment Requirement can provide alternative to short prison sentence: currently 1% of community sentences

What next?

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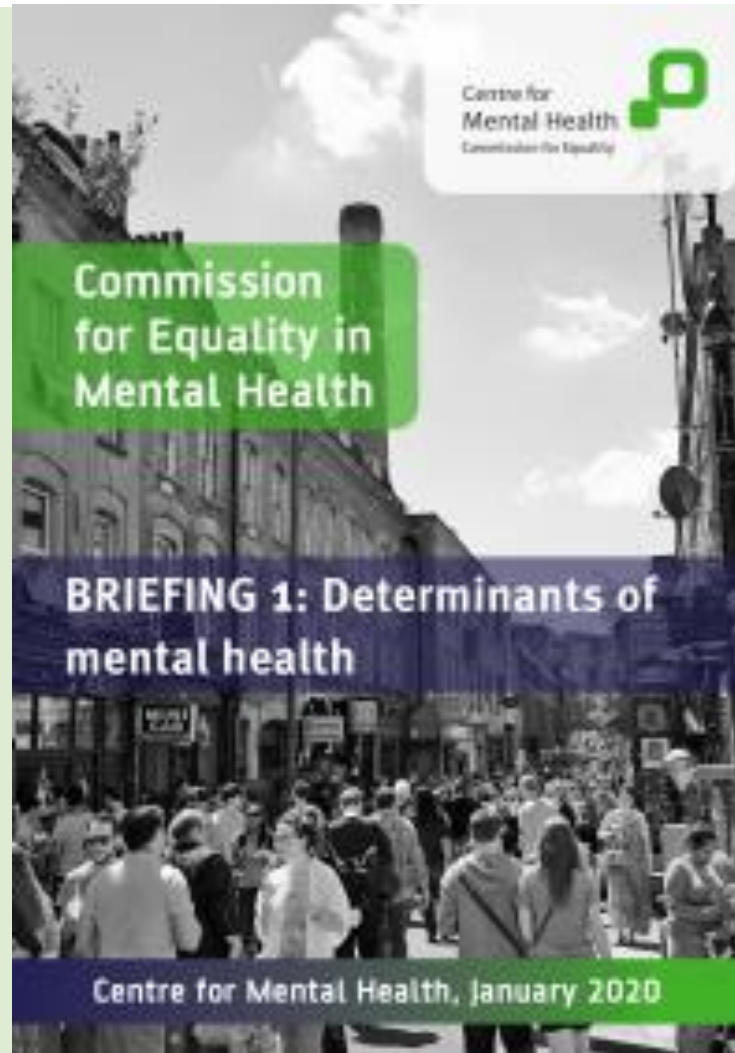
- ❑ Shift presumption from short prison sentences to community
- ❑ Make all prisons trauma-informed environments with priority for safety and wellbeing
- ❑ Provide 'through the gates' support & ensure released prisoners get access to community mental health services
- ❑ Peer-led & co-designed services likely to be most effective



- ❑ Aims to develop 'system design for equality'
- ❑ Currently seeking evidence to address:
 - Unequal social and economic determinants of mental health
 - Unequal access to support for mental health
 - Unequal experiences and outcomes
- ❑ Seeking solutions at community, local, regional & national levels
- ❑ Let us know @MH_Equality

Commission for Equality in Mental Health

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Thank you

For more information:

andy.bell@centreformentalhealth.org.uk

@CentreforMH @EquallyWellUK @Andy__Bell__

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