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Dear mental health stakeholder

Mental health in the Long Term Plan for the NHS

At the 70th anniversary of the NHS, it is right that the country has the opportunity to recommit to the service.

The government have announced a financial settlement which represents a clear gear change in the amount of funding that will be available over the next five years for the NHS. This means we can do more than stand still, and that we can make sensible phased improvements to deliver a sustainable NHS for the future.

As a result of our hard working staff, the contributions of service users and the investment and objectives set out in the *Five Year Forward View for Mental Health*, by the end of 2020/21, one million more people of all ages will have access to high quality care for their mental health needs.

The transformation of mental health services that is necessary to address significant unmet demand cannot be delivered overnight but we've made important progress, with investment in mental health rising faster than increases in other areas of the health budget and starting to deliver better outcomes for more people. In the past year alone, we've seen a record high recovery rate for people with depression and anxiety, 7,000 extra women getting perinatal mental health care, and thousands more children getting timely help with eating disorders.

However, there remains a long way to go and making parity between mental and physical health a reality will take time. Our goal post-2021 remains to deliver world-class mental health care, which will mean going even further to improve access to high-quality care for our mental health needs, integrate services and focus on improving the outcomes for everyone who uses our services. We can't tackle mental ill health in isolation though. Every part of society has a role to play with schools, councils and employers needing to step up.

A five year funding settlement, mapped to a ten year plan, gives us a once in a lifetime opportunity to get a number of challenging questions right:

1. What are your top three priorities for meeting the mental health needs of people of all ages in England? Over the next five, and ten years?
2. What gaps in service provision currently exist, and how do you think the NHS should address them (these can overlap with Q1 but may include a longer list)?
3. People with physical health problems do not always have their mental health needs addressed; and people with mental health problems do not always have their physical health needs met. How do you think we can improve this?
4. There are some significant inequalities in how people access and experience care for their mental health needs, and in their outcomes, including but not limited to people who have 'protected characteristics' under the *Equality Act 2010*. What are your views on what practical steps the NHS should take to address inequalities in the services it provides?
5. How best can we bridge the gap between children's and adults' mental health services?
6. How can we recruit, train and retain the workforce to deliver the changes we need, particularly to meet your priorities (Q1 above)?
7. Do you think the NHS should be doing more to prevent mental ill-health? If so, what should we do to improve this?
8. Do you think the NHS could do more to intervene early for people with mental ill-health? If so, are there any Mental Health problems we should prioritise to provide better early intervention?
9. People with more serious and complex mental health problems do not always receive the care they need. Which groups would you prioritise and what extra help would you like to see developed by the NHS?
10. Are there examples of innovative/excellent practice (in mental health care or that could be applied from other areas) that you think could be scaled-up nationally to enhance the quality of care people receive for their mental health, reduce costs and/or improve efficiency of delivery?
11. What do you think are the specific challenges that will prevent the NHS from being able to deliver good mental health care, and what should we do to overcome them?*

* Whilst the importance of developing NHS services that promote prevention and are fully integrated with all of the relevant services (e.g. social care, employment and housing support) will be a key component of developing the Long Term Plan for the NHS, Local Authority budgets and the budget for Public Health England are not within the scope of the funding settlement for the NHS. We do, however, acknowledge the interdependencies of the health, community and social sectors; and will be sharing feedback with partners to your ideas can be heard.

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We would be delighted to hear from you, your organisation and your networks about how we should address these challenges. Wherever possible, we would also be grateful if you could help to facilitate a discussion based on these questions with your members/ stakeholders/ clinicians/ service user groups. We are inviting a written submission of less than 1,500 words in response to any or all of the questions above. We ask that you also identify how many members/ stakeholders/ clinicians/ service user groups were involved in the preparation of your submission in your response to support it even further.

Ideally we would like you to feed back to us by 31 August 2018.

We are really grateful for your support in shaping the future of the NHS.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this then please contact us at england.mentalhealthpmo@nhs.net. If you have any other information that you want to share with us then please do contact us via this email address.

Thank you,



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