

Royal College
of Psychiatrists

Four-Step Manifesto

**12 million
voters
across the UK
will experience
a mental
health problem
in their lifetime**

- 1 Stop harmful cuts to mental health services**
- 2 Treble mental health research funding**
- 3 Invest in early intervention**
- 4 Put mental health at the heart of public health**

www.fairdeal4mentalhealth.co.uk

Mental health is a vote-winning issue

1 in 4 people in the UK will have a mental health problem in their lifetime – that is at least 12 million voters across England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. Yet mental health is still too low a priority in politics.

The Royal College of Psychiatrists believes that this General Election campaign is an important opportunity for parliamentary candidates to champion mental health and political parties to commit to taking action when in Government. It is paramount that the voices of psychiatrists, patients and carers influence the debate.

Mental health does not get a Fair Deal. Despite recent improvements, on measures of funding, quality and access, mental health services are still poorer than physical health services. Psychiatrists, patients and carers tell us that the economic downturn is already threatening services.

College research has shown that **there has never been a worse time to cut mental health services, when demand is likely to increase and not go down.** Spending less will mean greater human, social and economic costs now and in the future.

We believe that a Fair Deal means equal access to evidence-based care and treatment for people with mental health problems.

Our four-step manifesto presents a clear plan of action for the next Government and four steps to achieve it. With **immediate action**, and **a long-term vision**, it is possible to achieve a Fair Deal for mental health.

Mental health is a vote-winning issue. Speak up for 12 million people at the General Election.



Dinesh Bhugra
President, Royal College of Psychiatrists



Who is the manifesto for?

- **The next Government** – to implement immediately. These four steps are the political priorities that we will seek to work on with the next Government. *We will be meeting with Ministers after the election to pursue our manifesto steps.*
- **Parliamentary candidates** – to promote loudly and clearly during the election campaign, and to commit to supporting if elected to Parliament. *We will provide information, evidence and real-life stories.*
- **Psychiatrists, patients and carers** – to raise with local candidates in meetings, debates, in correspondence or just on the doorstep! *Our General Election web pages show where to find information on candidates and provide an opportunity to feed in personal views and experiences.*

A Fair Deal for Mental Health: one goal, four steps

A Fair Deal means: equal access to evidence-based care and treatment for people with mental health problems

1 Stop harmful cuts to mental health services

We need the services and treatments recommended for use in the NHS to be made available to all – they must not become an easy target for cuts. *Cuts in dementia, addiction and general adult services are already affecting access to services and are threatening people's mental health.* Mental healthcare still does not get an equal share of funding compared with physical healthcare. Clinicians and managers must lead funding decisions.



2 Treble mental health research funding

Mental health research can change people's lives. *Recent figures showed that mental health received only 6.5% of total research funding compared with 25% for cancer and 15% for neurological diseases.* Mental health research does not reflect the number of people affected by mental illness. It must at least treble to match this impact.



3 Invest in early intervention

Medical guidelines state that early intervention, in particular through psychological therapy for children and across ages, is key in ensuring that mental ill health is prevented: *50% of mental disorders start before the age of 16 and 75% begin before of the age of 25.* Intervening early saves money as well as improving life chances.



4 Put mental health at the heart of public health

To achieve good public health, we need good mental health. We know the economic downturn is likely to have a negative impact on the mental health of society. *Poor mental health increases the incidence of heart disease, stroke and cancer and is associated with a range of risk factors, such as smoking, alcohol misuse and obesity.* Mental health *must* be at the core of any public health strategy.





About the College's public affairs work

The College's Westminster public affairs work is directed by the Westminster Parliamentary Liaison Committee. The Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland Divisions carry out public affairs work in their respective countries.

We gather political intelligence to inform our approach, and work closely with Ministers and shadow spokespeople across the Departments of State. We pursue College priorities through briefings on legislation, debates, parliamentary questions and consultation responses. We also meet with parliamentarians and attend party conferences.

It is important for the College to hear about any contact that members have with parliamentarians and local politicians. We are both happy to offer advice and keen to learn from your experiences. This can then be fed into our national work.

For more information on this four-step manifesto, or on any other public affairs issue, please contact the College's Public Affairs Manager, at

publicaffairs@rcpsych.ac.uk or

0207 235 2351 ext. 6149

Fair Deal for Mental Health

Our General Election 2010 work is a part of the College's Fair Deal campaign, launched in July 2008. Fair Deal is a 3-year campaign to tackle the inequalities facing people with mental health problems and learning disabilities. We consulted with psychiatrists, service users and carers, and eight key areas emerged. These became our Fair Deal priorities:

Funding	Discrimination and stigma
Access to services	Engagement with service users/carers
In-patient services	Availability of psychological therapies
Recovery	Linking mental and physical health

For more information see - www.fairdeal4mentalhealth.co.uk