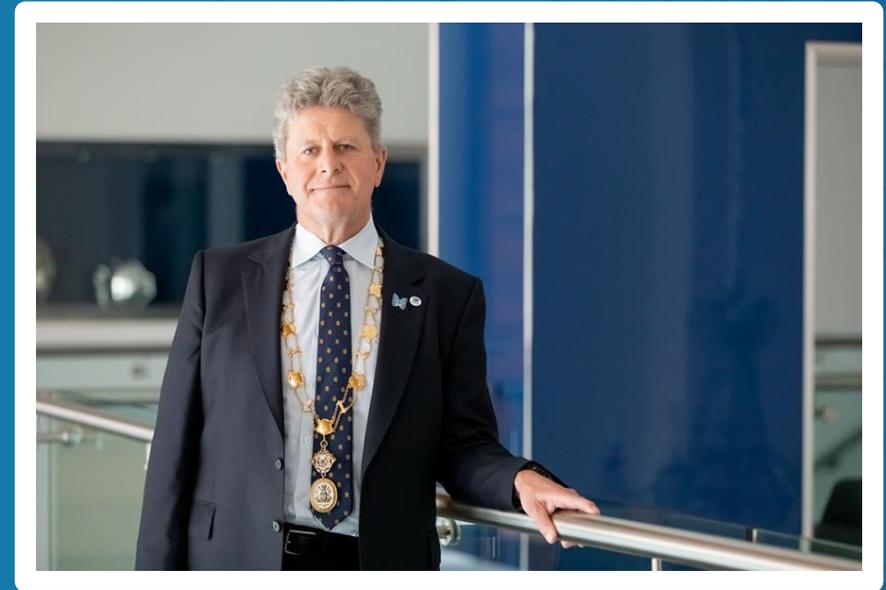


# How to be a preventative psychiatrist

**Dr Adrian James**  
**President of the Royal College of Psychiatrists**

# About the President

- 47th President after winning the Presidential Election at the start of 2020
- A Forensic Psychiatrist and front-line clinician for 33 years, served as the College Registrar for the last 5 years
- My priorities as President are:
  - Equity between physical and mental health
  - Championing diversity
  - Supporting the workforce
  - Sustainability at the heart of all we do



# What is prevention

- Identifying the factors and triggers for physical and mental illness or causes of the causes
- Systematically challenging or controlling these factors at their source
- Improving systems to enable better outcomes

# Examples of prevention

- **Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences** – linked to increased relative risk of heart disease, alcohol misuse, depression, and attempts at suicide in adults;
- **Reducing dependencies** – factors like smoking, obesity, alcohol and substance misuse shorten healthy life years and make the task of improving quality of life for those with severe mental illness more challenging;
- **Ensuring fair access to medical care** - public health systems must be as equipped and able to provide interventional as private health systems

**These factors and others revolve around a common cause - Poverty and inequality** – linked to triggers for that affect physical and mental ill health (including smoking, poor diet, and physical inactivity), poorer health outcomes, and social drift;

# Why prevention

***Prevention is the first duty of the health system and those who work in it, on moral, ethical, and sustainability grounds***

- Prevention can reduce the severity of, or entirely mitigate illnesses, thus reducing suffering and distress;
- Prevention can reduce the costs to carers and wider society by applying resources at the right time;

# Your role in prevention

- How do you communicate with other health professionals about the drivers of a patient's illness and their support needs?
- How have you engaged on issues of inequality in your local organisation?
- Are you, or can you be, in a position to influence discourse or mitigate inequalities?

**As mental health professionals, we cannot remain as observers; we must act on, and challenge poverty and inequality when and where we see it.**

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