

Johnson announces £170 million boost to mental health therapies

Health Secretary Alan Johnson today announced a substantial £170 million expansion of psychological therapies to provide better support for people with mental health problems such as anxiety and depression.

Millions of people suffer from depression and anxiety. These are the most common of the mental health problems, which account for 40% of the numbers on Incapacity Benefit. Treating them is estimated to take up about a third of GPs' time.

Psychological therapies have proved to be as effective as drugs in tackling these common mental health problems and are often more effective in the longer term. NICE guidelines on treatment for depression and anxiety recommend therapies, such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT).

Building on two demonstration projects, the Government will next year roll out psychological therapies to **twenty new areas before increasing services to cover the whole country over the next few years.**

Health Secretary Alan Johnson said:

"More than one in six people suffer from mental health problems at any one time. For many people prescribing medication is a successful treatment but we know that psychological therapies work equally well.

"Today's announcement shows the government's commitment to mental health. Improving access to psychological therapies will give people with mental health problems a real choice of treatment, helping to reduce dependence on medication."

By 2010/11, the NHS will spend £170m per year on psychological therapies, with more than £30m in 2008/09 and more than £100m in 2009/10. Over the next three years, this investment in Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) will mean:

- 900,000 more people treated for depression and anxiety
- 450,000 of them are likely to be completely cured (as expected with NICE guidelines)
- 25,000 fewer people with mental health problems on sick pay and benefits
- **3,600 more newly trained psychological therapists giving evidence-based treatment**

- **all GP practices having access to psychological therapies as the programme rolls out**
- average waiting for psychological treatments down from the current 18 months to a few weeks (in line with urgent outpatient waiting times in the rest of the NHS) as the service rolls out

Lord Richard Layard, co-author of the London School of Economics Depression Report said:

'This is great news and just what we've all been waiting for. Mental health is the biggest social problem in our country. This new service will bring relief from misery to millions of people.'

'I'm delighted the Government has committed to implement the NICE guidelines on treating depression and, importantly, is doing so in the first big announcement of the new spending review.'

Health Minister Ivan Lewis said:

"This major expansion of psychological therapies represents a historic transformation of mental health services in our country. These new services will ensure people have the support to cope with anxiety and depression while minimising the stigma associated with using mental health services."

Notes

1. Mental health problems are the largest single cause of disability and illness in England - accounting for

- 40% of all disability (physical and mental)
- nearly 40% of people on Incapacity Benefit (and a secondary factor for 10% more of them)
- a third of all GPs' time

2. About 1 in 6 UK adults has a common mental health condition (i.e. depression or anxiety disorders) and an estimated 91m working days a year are lost to mental illness. The Government has set an aspiration to raise the number of working age adults in employment from 75-80% of the working age population, and has a target to reduce the number of people on Incapacity Benefit.

3. Huge numbers of people suffering from these conditions are not getting the treatment they need to bring them out of the misery these conditions involve. Those in treatment are only

- 1 in 4 of those diagnosed
- less than half of those in a 'depressive episode'
- taking drugs prescribed by their GP, although they would prefer the more-recently developed 'therapy'

4. Professor Lord Layard of the LSE puts the total economic loss, in sick leave, lost jobs and reduced output, due to depression and chronic anxiety at

- £12 billion a year - 1% of our national income
- £7 billion of this hits the taxpayer in incapacity benefits paid out and income tax not received

5. A review of the policies needed to improve mental health, with a particular focus on supporting people to gain employment and stay in employment was announced in the 2006 Budget. The review recommended that improving the way that people with a mental health condition are supported and treated, with a holistic approach engaging individuals, employers, and GPs, as well as Jobcentre Plus and the wider NHS.

6. GPs play a key role in supporting people with common mental health problems. Recognising this, Government will be working with the Royal College of GPs to ensure the curriculum reflects best practice.

7. The two national IAPT demonstration sites at Newham and Doncaster have achieved:

- Impressive recovery rates that replicate clinical trial and are in line with NICE guidelines (50-60% on most rigorous measures)
- Excellent recording of treatment outcomes for the first time in mental health (90%), leading to an opportunity for a nationwide system of routine outcomes monitoring and thus to more improvements
- Significant achievement in helping people off statutory sick pay and back to work/volunteering/education/training
- Treating large numbers of people in a short period of time from a standing start - more than 1,000 in Newham and more than 4,000 in Doncaster
- Meeting previously unidentified and unmet need by opening to self-referral - in Newham's community people came forward who were just as ill as those referred by GPs and whose conditions were twice as chronic (four years long rather than two). They responded as well as those referred by GPs.

RichardLayard

TheObserver
14October2007

And now for the good news about therapy

A decision was taken last week that will transform the lives of millions of people. State-of-the-art psychological therapy will become available to anyone suffering from depression or crippling anxiety disorders. At last, people with mental-health problems will be offered the best possible care, just as they would expect if they had a physical illness.

The government's commitment last week is simple and unequivocal. It will implement the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (Nice) guidelines for depression and anxiety disorders, which say that everyone who needs it should have access to psychological therapy.

This will be a huge change. At present, the guidelines are simply not implemented, due to a shortage of therapists. But in response to a public campaign in which *The Observer* played an important part, the government has recognised the need for a new approach.

On Wednesday, Alan Johnson announced that 'we will build a groundbreaking psychological therapy service in Britain', with money to match. This will mean a substantial team of therapists in every area, capable of providing sustained, state-of-the-art, one-to-one therapy that can transform lives. It will also provide brief therapy where that will suffice. The teams will eventually be big enough to handle without delay everyone who refers themselves or is referred by their GP.

To build this service will take a few years. It is a real challenge, because so many people are in need. Six million people suffer from diagnosable depression or crippling anxiety disorders, such as agoraphobia or panic attacks. As a recent article in the *Lancet* shows, these conditions are not only intensely distressing, but more debilitating than many chronic physical illnesses, such as angina, asthma, arthritis or diabetes.

But while more than 90 per cent of cases of these physical illnesses get treated, only a quarter of those with depression or anxiety get any treatment at all. What most patients want is therapy rather than drugs and GPs are desperate because it is not available.

Therapy is as effective as drugs in the short run and more effective in preventing relapse. The best-studied therapy is cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), which trains a person how to challenge negative thoughts and feelings and how to develop positive thinking and action. It has been tested in

hundreds of scientifically designed clinical trials that show that after fewer than 16 sessions, more than half the people treated will have recovered.

For example, Sarah was raped at university in 1998 at the age of 21. She was haunted by memories of the rape and became so anxious and depressed that she left university. Two bouts of counselling made no difference. In 2003, after five wasted years of anxiety and depression, she had 15 sessions of CBT. By the last session, she was no longer haunted by the memories and felt back to her old self. She has remained well and survived a highly stressful experience by using the tools she had learned through CBT.

Some people who are cured of depression relapse later on, but relapse is much less common for people treated with CBT than with drugs, unless the drugs are taken indefinitely. For anxiety disorders, most cures are permanent. CBT is not the only therapy that works. Nice also recommends other therapies for particular problems and they will doubtless recommend more as the evidence accumulates.

So how do we know this is for real? For one thing, the money is there to develop the service as fast as it is possible to train the extra therapists. Second, the NHS's operational priorities include psychological therapy in the 13 'indicators' by which it will judge its overall performance. So all eyes will be on what is happening, both nationally and locally.

The greatest challenge is to train the new therapists, since, by 2011, the service will be employing some 3,500. Most of the training will need to be in CBT, since this is the therapy in which there is the greatest shortage. Some of the trainees will be clinical psychologists, but the majority will be drawn from other mental-health professions, for example, nurses, social workers and counsellors taking a one-year training in CBT. We hope this new profession of 'psychological therapist' will attract many of the most talented and idealistic people who want to devote their lives to the relief of misery.

It will take up to six years to get to where we need to be, but the government is now committed to getting there. That is the significance of last week and a major tribute to the vision of Alan Johnson.

No longer will we have the intolerable anomaly that while almost every physical wound gets treated, the wounded minds of millions of people go without treatment. That is a real revolution.

Professor Richard Layard is director of the Well-Being Programme in LSE's Centre for Economic Performance. He was co-author of the LSE Depression Report published in The Observer in September 2006.

Nigel Hawkes, Health Editor, *The Times*
11 October 2007

More talking therapists to help the depressed

Nearly a million more people will benefit from cognitive behavioural therapy after an extra £170 million was pledged yesterday by Alan Johnson.

It is a “talking therapy” that guides people with conditions such as depression and anxiety into changing the way they feel about themselves.

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) recommends it as a first-line treatment, especially for adolescents.

But it has not been widely available because of a shortage of money. The additional funding will go towards an expansion of mental health therapies to ensure that such treatments are available UK-wide.

Studies have shown that psychological therapies can be as effective as drugs in tackling common mental health problems, and are often more successful in the longer term.

As many as six million UK working age adults suffer from depression or anxiety at any one time, resulting in an estimated 91 million working days lost every year. This equates to an estimated annual economic cost, in sick leave, lost jobs and reduced output, of £12 billion.

The new money, which will be spent over the next four years, will treat 900,000 more people for depression and anxiety and provide an additional 3,600 trained therapists.

All GP practices will also have access to nondrug treatments.

Mr Johnson said: “More than one in six people suffer from mental health problems at any one time. For many people medication is a successful treatment but we know that psychological therapies work equally well. Today’s announcement shows the Government’s commitment to mental health.

“Improving access to psychological therapies will give people a real choice of treatment, helping to reduce dependence on medication.”

Lord Richard Layard, co-author of the London School of Economics Depression Report, said: “This is great news and just what we have all been waiting for.

“Mental health is the biggest social problem in our country. This new service will bring relief to millions.”

BABCP press release
10 October 2007

BABCP (British Association of Behavioural and Cognitive Therapies) welcomes £170million boost for CBT

The BABCP today warmly welcomed Health Secretary Alan Johnson's announcement of a £170 million expansion in psychological therapies.

BABCP President David Veale said the announcement would increase access to CBT for hundreds of thousands of people and mean more than 3,000 new therapists would be needed. Dr Veale said: "This is fantastic news for all those people who have been waiting for access to CBT. It will mean a massive expansion of CBT right across the country with thousands more therapists trained and employed.

"This is probably the single biggest step forward in the provision of CBT that we have ever seen in Britain. It also means that mental health is now taking centre-stage and being recognised by the Government as a major issue for our times.

Mr Johnson, who was speaking on World Mental Health Day, said: "More than one in six people suffer from mental health problems at any one time. For many people prescribing medication is a successful treatment but we know that psychological therapies work equally well.

"Today's announcement shows the government's commitment to mental health. Improving access to psychological therapies will give people with mental health problems a real choice of treatment, helping to reduce dependence on medication."

Psychological therapies, such as CBT, have proved to be as effective as drugs in tackling common mental health problems and are often more effective in the longer term. NICE guidelines on treatment for depression and anxiety recommend therapies such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)."