

The many examples of effective local strategies included in the full version of this document demonstrate how much has already been achieved. To achieve sustained improvements will involve:

- working with those with the potential to influence mental health across all sectors
- embedding mental health promotion within existing structures for improving health and social outcomes e.g. community strategies and local area agreements

Mental health promotion is a shared responsibility. Localities now have an opportunity to build on existing mental health promotion strategies. Good practice in local arrangements for delivery includes the following elements:

- local needs assessment
- clear statement of what success would look like and how it will be measured
- cross sector ownership, governance and resourcing
- links to wider initiatives to improve health and social outcomes
- evidence based interventions
- building public mental health capacity
- developing public mental health intelligence

Choosing Health states:

***“We will have delivered if we improve the mental health and well-being of the general population”***

The Government’s programme to improve mental health services and to tackle stigma, discrimination and social exclusion experienced by people with mental health problems is set out in the National Service Framework for Mental Health and the Social Exclusion Unit report Social Exclusion and Mental Health. These efforts need to be complemented by further action across all sectors to promote the mental health and well-being of the whole population. In his report The National Service Framework for Mental health: five years on, Louis Appleby, National Director for Mental Health noted:

***“we need to broaden our focus from specialist mental health services to the mental health needs of the community as a whole”***

There are many opportunities to improve the mental health of individuals and communities, through work with parents and families, in schools, in the workplace and in local neighbourhoods, where safety, access to the natural world, valued ‘escape’ facilities e.g. parks, public spaces, leisure and recreation protect mental health. Many existing programmes within community strategies, crime and disorder reduction partnerships or local area agreements will be directly relevant to mental health. Action on housing, noise, traffic congestion, fear of crime and cleaning and greening the environment all contribute to promoting mental health. Even small improvements in mental well-being will achieve significant cost benefits through improvements in physical health, productivity and quality of life. It is hoped that this document will support those currently working to achieve improved public mental health and also encourage wider awareness of this crucial issue.



## Making it possible: Improving mental health and well-being in England

Executive summary

For the full version of this document, please go to [www.nimhe.org.uk](http://www.nimhe.org.uk)

## Summary

This document provides good practice to support the development and delivery of action to improve mental health and well-being. It sets a framework for action to:

- raise public awareness of how to look after our own mental health and other people's
- involve all communities and organisations, across all sectors, in taking positive steps to promote and protect mental well-being

This document supports the requirement of standard one of the National Service Framework for Mental Health (NSF):

***“to promote mental health for all, working with individuals, organisations and communities”***

and the commitments made in the White Paper Choosing Health:

***“we will ensure that standard one of the NSF for Mental Health, which deals with mental health promotion, is fully implemented”***

***“we will have delivered if we improve the mental health and well-being of the general population”***

Improving the mental health of the population contributes to achieving a wide range of cross government priorities for children and adults. Improving mental health will contribute to meeting Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets, in health, education, neighbourhood renewal, crime, community cohesion, sustainable development, employment, culture and sport.

The skills and attributes associated with positive mental health lead to improved physical health, better quality of life, reduced crime, higher educational attainment, economic well-being and personal dignity. Mental well-being also contributes fundamentally to the extent to which people feel able and motivated to exercise choice and control and to adopt healthy lifestyles. It is essential to enabling individuals, families and communities to realise their full potential and to make a positive contribution. The Government is committed to a greater understanding of and focus on well-being and work is underway to explore how policies might change with an explicit well-being focus.

There is sufficient good quality research to demonstrate both the benefits and effectiveness of promoting mental health. While local priorities for action to improve mental health and well-being will be determined by local needs assessment, informed by evidence of effectiveness, there is a strong case for action in the following areas:

### Public mental health: key areas and measures of success

#### ACTION: MARKETING MENTAL HEALTH

People are well informed and motivated to look after their own and others' mental health  
People have positive and accepting attitudes to people with mental health problems

#### ACTION: EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

People have access to a wide range of sources of support for emotional and psychological difficulties  
Reduction in inequalities in access to non-pharmacological sources of support, notably for Black and Minority Ethnic Communities and older people

#### ACTION: TACKLING VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

Reduction in prevalence of mental health problems  
Reduction in self harming behaviour

#### ACTION: PARENTS AND EARLY YEARS

Parents and caregivers have the knowledge, skills and capacity to meet the emotional and social needs of infants and young children  
Parents and carers have access to support for themselves and their parenting roles, delivered in a way that is evidence based and meets their needs

#### ACTION: SCHOOLS

Schools achieving National Healthy Schools Status targets and delivering SEAL

#### ACTION: EMPLOYMENT

Reduction in mental health related unemployment

#### ACTION: WORKPLACE

Workplaces adopt HSE stress management standards  
Support in place to enable people off work with mental health problems to return to work

#### ACTION: COMMUNITIES

Improved quality of life and life satisfaction  
Increase in the proportion of local areas with a high 'liveability' score

#### ACTION: LATER LIFE

Improved life satisfaction among older people  
Increased opportunities for older people to participate