

## Mental health and wellbeing plan: call for evidence

Evidence for the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) by Wildlife and Countryside Link

Submitted via online survey and emailed to [mhplan@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:mhplan@dhsc.gov.uk)

7 July 2022

*Wildlife and Countryside Link (Link) is the largest environment and wildlife coalition in England, bringing together 65 organisations to use their strong joint voice for the protection of nature.*

### **Responses to selected questions:**

#### **How can we help people to improve their own wellbeing?**

*Your ideas may include actions which can be taken by different types of organisations – such as national and local government, public services such as schools, and the NHS, employers and the private and voluntary sectors. It can also include things that happen between family members and local communities.*

*Please provide your suggestions in relation to the wellbeing of different groups: a) Infants and their parents or primary caregivers, b) Children and young people, c) Working age adults, d) Older adults, e) People that are more likely to experience poor wellbeing (see Annex A)*

1. A healthy natural environment, access to nature, and nature connection are important wider determinants of mental health and wellbeing. The mental health and wellbeing benefits of a healthy natural environment, access to high quality nature, and connection with nature are significant and well-evidenced. There is strong scientific evidence that spending at least 120 minutes a week in nature leads to a significant increase in health and wellbeing.<sup>1</sup> People who are more connected to nature tended to experience more positive affect, vitality, and life satisfaction compared to those less connected to nature.<sup>2,3</sup>
2. People also highly value nature: 82% of UK adults said that being in nature makes them happy and 92% of UK adults felt that spending time outdoors was good for their mental health.<sup>4</sup>
3. The psychological benefits of nature increase with biodiversity. More species-rich urban greenspaces were found to boost the positive effects on visitors.<sup>5</sup>
4. The mental health and wellbeing benefits of a healthy natural environment are especially important for several groups within our population who are most likely to experience a degraded natural environment and face barriers to accessing nature, but are also the groups who are most at risk of mental health problems, including deprived communities, people from ethnic minority backgrounds, young people and people with disabilities. In the UK, 40% of people from ethnic minority backgrounds live in the most greenspace deprived areas and 29% of people living with a long-term illness or disability had not visited a natural space in the previous month.<sup>6</sup>
5. There are several ways in which a healthy natural environment boosts mental health and wellbeing.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-019-44097-3>

<sup>2</sup> <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25249992/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.internationaljournalofwellbeing.org/index.php/ijow/article/view/1267>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/the-people-and-nature-survey-for-england-data-and-publications-from-adults-survey-year-1-april-2020-march-2021-official-statistics>

<sup>5</sup> <https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/abs/10.1098/rsbl.2007.0149>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.groundwork.org.uk/about-groundwork/reports/outofbounds/>

- a. Firstly, simple exposure to nature has been found to be psychologically restorative and has beneficial influences on individuals' emotions and ability to reflect on life problems.<sup>7</sup> However, in particular, nature connectedness and engaging with nature through simple activities, such as smelling the flowers, was found to be a significant factor in influencing mental health and wellbeing.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, the UK ranks the lowest of 14 European countries for nature connectedness and for wellbeing.<sup>9</sup>
  - b. Secondly, a healthy natural environment and access to high quality natural spaces encourages particular beneficial behaviours, including physical activity (physical health and activity is a significant factor in mental health and wellbeing<sup>10</sup>). People who exercise outside at least once per week are half less likely to experience poor mental health compared with those who do not do so.<sup>11</sup> In addition to physical activities, natural spaces also encourage cultural activities, increased social engagement and social cohesion, which are linked to various physical and psychological health benefits.<sup>12</sup> Natural spaces can also be used to deliver structured interventions and care to prevent and treat mental health and wellbeing.
  - c. Finally and more generally, a healthy natural environment is an important wider determinant of health as it is one of the foundations for physical and mental health and wellbeing.<sup>13</sup> Avoiding and mitigating environmental risks such as flooding, urban heating, air pollution and noise pollution are essential to improving physical health (again, which significantly influences mental health) and mental health outcomes. Tackling climate change and biodiversity loss more widely is important to preventing poor mental health outcomes related to acute events caused by climate and ecological breakdown (e.g., extreme weather events), prolonged exposure to the effects of climate change (e.g., changing natural, social and cultural environments) and anxiety and depression worsened by the climate and ecological crises.<sup>14</sup> Recent research from the Royal College of Psychiatrists (RCP) found that 60% of people say that concerns about the climate and ecological emergencies are impacting their mental health.
6. As the President of the RCP, Dr Adrian James, said: "Our mental health and physical health is inextricably linked with the health of the natural world. The climate and ecological emergency is a mental health emergency."<sup>15</sup>
  7. There is strong evidence about the return on investment for health outcomes from investing in nature. The Government itself found that if everyone in England had access to good quality spaces, this could save the NHS an estimated £2.1 billion every year just in treatment costs.<sup>16</sup> A wider research study found that an investment of £5.5 billion in green infrastructure across the UK would bring a total of £200 billion in physical health benefits through disease prevention and mental

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5663018/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.internationaljournalofwellbeing.org/index.php/ijow/article/view/1267>

<sup>9</sup> <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13280-022-01744-w>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277953617306639>

<sup>11</sup> <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/22705180/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6388234/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/news-and-features/blogs/detail/sustainability-blog/2021/11/11/green-spaces-and-mental-health--what-s-the-connection>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00074/full>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/news-and-features/latest-news/detail/2021/10/28/the-climate-crisis-will-take-a-far-greater-toll-on-our-mental-health-if-cop26-fails-to-deliver-says-rcpsych>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/investing-in-nature-is-an-investment-in-the-nhs-says-environment-agency-chief-executive>

wellbeing benefits, to help alleviate the strain on local health service providers and improve people's quality of life.<sup>17</sup>

8. To ensure that all people have the mental health and wellbeing benefits of nature, we can encourage people to demand and contribute to nature's recovery and a healthy natural environment, to access and enjoy nature-rich accessible spaces, and to engage with and connect with nature.
9. All people should have access to a healthy natural environment. Across England, we need to better protect and manage species and habitats, make more space for wildlife to recover and create ecological corridors throughout the country to connect these wild spaces. Nature's recovery is essential to preventing biodiversity loss, mitigating and adapting to climate change and tackling air, water and noise pollution. The Government must deliver 30x30 (the target to protect at least 30% of land and sea by 2030) in a meaningful way,<sup>18</sup> meet the targets under the Environment Act, including the target to halt the decline in species abundance by 2030,<sup>19</sup> and effectively implement the new tools and policies in the Environment Act including Biodiversity Net Gain and Local Nature Recovery Strategies. While the bulk of the responsibility lies with Government, people should demand and contribute to nature's recovery and access to a healthy natural environment across the country and in their local area.
10. Everyone should enjoy high quality and accessible natural spaces for their health and wellbeing. All people should have access to nature nearby (within a certain distance of home) as well as larger, wilder natural spaces in the landscape. Natural spaces should be nature-rich, with thriving wildlife and ecosystems, varied, providing opportunities for a variety of uses, and valued by the local community. Natural spaces must also be accessible and inclusive for all people to access, use and enjoy. While people from all walks of life value access to nature, there are particular barriers for women, older people, disabled people, people from ethnic minorities, and people living in deprived communities. All people should both be able to access natural spaces and feel safe and comfortable there. In new and existing development, developers, local authorities, and other public bodies should ensure equitable provision to access to high quality nature through improving the quality and accessibility of existing natural spaces, protecting existing natural spaces in the long-term, and planning and creating new natural spaces.
  - a. In new and existing development, developers, local authorities, and other public bodies should ensure equitable provision to access to high quality nature through improving the quality and accessibility of existing natural spaces, protecting existing natural spaces in the long-term, and planning and creating new natural spaces.
  - b. In new development, developers must provide new high quality accessible natural spaces for people to exercise, socialise, relax, commute and enjoy. Nature should also be embedded into the design of buildings, healthcare facilities, social care settings, homes and communities, where people can enjoy and interact.<sup>20</sup> As development will bring increased footfall in an area, having more natural spaces is essential.
  - c. In existing development, local authorities and other public bodies may have opportunities to provide new natural spaces. Streets and municipal car parks, typically owned by local highway authorities, can be converted to greenspace as part of reallocation of street space. Existing rivers can be daylighted, providing active transport routes and green corridors, for

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/press-release/new-research-shows-55bn-fund-needed-to-level-up-access-to-urban-green-space-as-part-of-uks-green-recovery>

<sup>18</sup> [https://www.wcl.org.uk/docs/WCL\\_Achieving\\_30x30\\_Land\\_and\\_Sea\\_Report.pdf](https://www.wcl.org.uk/docs/WCL_Achieving_30x30_Land_and_Sea_Report.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> [https://www.wcl.org.uk/docs/Environment\\_Act\\_targets\\_consultation\\_response.pdf](https://www.wcl.org.uk/docs/Environment_Act_targets_consultation_response.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5663018/#r5>

example the Porter Brook project. There are opportunities for local authorities to work with landowners such as Network Rail and statutory utilities, such as Thames Water, to create new natural spaces, e.g. New Maldon to Raynes Park walking and cycling link linear park. In privately owned space, local authorities can work with businesses and Business Improvement Districts to identify and deliver additional natural spaces, bringing green and beauty into the heart of communities.

- d. The design and implementation of existing environmental policies should include access considerations. The Environmental Land Management scheme should provide land managers with the financial support to meet the challenges and realise the opportunities presented by public access – thus allowing for a more connected and joined up path network, linking urban and rural areas, and ensuring that our natural environment “can be enjoyed, used by and cared for by everyone” as pledged in the 25-year environment plan. Public access is a public good: public access should be included in all components of ELM as an option available to farmers and land managers.<sup>21</sup> Following the Government’s response to the Glover Landscapes Review, reform of protected landscapes to bolster and support the ability of these landscapes to increase people’s connection with nature.<sup>22</sup>
  - e. Integrated care systems should consider their estates – how to improve their quality, including biodiversity, accessibility, and use by staff, by all who come into contact with the health and social care system, for patients for prevention and wellbeing, and for patient treatment. ICS’s green plans should include a plan for improving the quality, accessibility and use of their estates.
11. Nature engagement and connection should be encouraged. Nature connection can be developed and strengthened through a variety of pathways and ways of engaging with the natural world, including through sensory contact with the natural world, finding an emotional bond with, and love for, nature, taking time to appreciate the beauty of nature, thinking about the meaning and signs of nature, and showing compassion and care for nature.<sup>23</sup>
- a. Within the education system, climate and sustainability should have a place in every subject in the curriculum at all levels and in all settings. Outdoor learning as a framework for learning should be integrated across all subjects. A portion of every school day should be spent outside. Teacher training and support for teachers for climate education and for outdoor learning will be necessary to embed these in the education system in order to address poor attainment (outdoor learning has been proved to improve attainment) and improve the health and wellbeing of pupils.
  - b. Green social prescribing is an approach that has the opportunity to deliver systems change to facilitate nature connection, deliver improved mental health and wellbeing and alleviate pressure on health services. We welcome the green social prescribing pilots in England and suggest extending the length of the pilots and extending the program to other areas in England. With sufficient funding for coordination and to implement projects, green social prescribing has the potential to be transformative for the health and social care system, for nature’s recovery, and for people’s health and wellbeing. Nature-based care should be the new gold standard of care within the health and social care system.
  - c. A cross departmental approach and understanding of the current opportunities to improve physical activity and access to nature is essential in supporting people’s mental

<sup>21</sup> [https://www.wcl.org.uk/docs/Public\\_access\\_is\\_a\\_public\\_good-ELM\\_Link\\_briefing\\_Nov21.pdf](https://www.wcl.org.uk/docs/Public_access_is_a_public_good-ELM_Link_briefing_Nov21.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.wcl.org.uk/docs/Link%20response%20to%20Glover%20Review%20FINAL%202008.04.2022.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.derby.ac.uk/news/2021/new-guide-shows-the-pathways-to-a-stronger-connection-with-nature/>

health and wellbeing. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is currently leading on a refresh of the Government's sports strategy Sporting Futures. This provides an important opportunity for the sports strategy to compliment and integrate with the new Mental Health and Wellbeing Plan to ensure the Government's approach to sport, physical activity and health and wellbeing are truly cross departmental.

### **Do you have any suggestions for how we can improve the population's wellbeing?**

*This can include ideas about what local people and communities can do together, as well as things you want to see in health services, wider public services such as education settings, places of employment and the private and voluntary sectors.*

*Please provide your suggestions in relation to the wellbeing of different groups: a) Infants and their parents or primary caregivers, b) Children and young people, c) Working age adults, d) Older adults, e) People that are more likely to experience poor wellbeing (see Annex A)*

12. As outlined in our response to the first question, the mental health and wellbeing benefits and economic benefits from improved health outcomes of a healthy natural environment, access to high quality nature, and connection with nature are significant and well-evidenced and increase with biodiversity. People also highly value nature. However, access to a healthy natural environment, high quality natural spaces and nature connection is highly inequitable, as are health, including mental health, outcomes.
13. To improve wellbeing, prevent poor mental health, and to help treat and care for people with mental ill-health, we need a healthy natural environment and thriving natural spaces.
14. To ensure that all people have the mental health and wellbeing benefits of a healthy natural environment, we need to recover nature across the country and in local areas, to provide equitable access to nature-rich accessible spaces for everyone, and to connect and engage people with nature.
15. All actors, from individuals and communities, to the education system and integrated care systems, to local government and central government, have a role to play in creating a healthy natural environment, accessible natural spaces for everyone, and nature connectedness in order to improve mental health and wellbeing outcomes. Policies, action and investment should be targeted towards people and communities with poorer mental health outcomes and less access to a healthy natural environment, in order to reduce health inequalities.
16. All people should have access to a healthy natural environment. Across England, we need to better protect and manage species and habitats, make more space for wildlife to recover and create ecological corridors throughout the country to connect these wild spaces. Nature's recovery is essential to preventing biodiversity loss, mitigating and adapting to climate change and tackling air, water and noise pollution. The Government must deliver 30x30 (the target to protect at least 30% of land and sea by 2030) in a meaningful way,<sup>24</sup> meet the targets under the Environment Act, including the target to halt the decline in species abundance by 2030,<sup>25</sup> and effectively implement the new tools and policies in the Environment Act including Biodiversity Net Gain and Local Nature Recovery Strategies.
17. Everyone should have access to high quality and accessible natural spaces for their health and wellbeing. All people should have access to nature nearby (within a certain distance of home) as well as larger, wilder natural spaces in the landscape. Natural spaces should be nature-rich, with

<sup>24</sup> [https://www.wcl.org.uk/docs/WCL\\_Achieving\\_30x30\\_Land\\_and\\_Sea\\_Report.pdf](https://www.wcl.org.uk/docs/WCL_Achieving_30x30_Land_and_Sea_Report.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> [https://www.wcl.org.uk/docs/Environment\\_Act\\_targets\\_consultation\\_response.pdf](https://www.wcl.org.uk/docs/Environment_Act_targets_consultation_response.pdf)

thriving wildlife and ecosystems, varied, providing opportunities for a variety of uses, and valued by the local community. Natural spaces must also be accessible and inclusive for all people to access, use and enjoy. While people from all walks of life value access to nature, there are particular barriers for women, older people, disabled people, people from ethnic minorities, and people living in deprived communities. All people should both be able to access natural spaces and feel safe and comfortable there.

- a. In new and existing development, developers, local authorities, and other public bodies should ensure equitable provision to access to high quality nature through improving the quality and accessibility of existing natural spaces, protecting existing natural spaces in the long-term, and planning and creating new natural spaces.
  - b. In new development, developers must provide new high quality accessible natural spaces for people to exercise, socialise, relax, commute and enjoy. Nature should also be embedded into the design of buildings, healthcare facilities, social care settings, homes and communities, where people can enjoy and interact.<sup>26</sup> As development will bring increased footfall in an area, having more natural spaces is essential.
  - c. In existing development, local authorities and other public bodies may have opportunities to provide new natural spaces. Streets and municipal car parks, typically owned by local highway authorities, can be converted to greenspace as part of reallocation of street space. Existing rivers can be daylighted, providing active transport routes and green corridors, for example the Porter Brook project. There are opportunities for local authorities to work with landowners such as Network Rail and statutory utilities, such as Thames Water, to create new natural spaces, e.g. New Maldon to Raynes Park walking and cycling link linear park. In privately owned space, local authorities can work with businesses and Business Improvement Districts to identify and deliver additional natural spaces, bringing green and beauty into the heart of communities.
  - d. The design and implementation of existing environmental policies should include access considerations. The Environmental Land Management scheme should provide land managers with the financial support to meet the challenges and realise the opportunities presented by public access – thus allowing for a more connected and joined up path network, linking urban and rural areas, and ensuring that our natural environment “can be enjoyed, used by and cared for by everyone” as pledged in the 25-year environment plan. Public access is a public good: public access should be included in all components of ELM as an option available to farmers and land managers.<sup>27</sup> Following the Government’s response to the Glover Landscapes Review, reform of protected landscapes to bolster and support the ability of these landscapes to increase people’s connection with nature.<sup>28</sup>
  - e. Integrated care systems should consider their estates – how to improve their quality, including biodiversity, accessibility, and use by staff, by all who come into contact with the health and social care system, for patients for prevention and wellbeing, and for patient treatment. ICS’s green plans should include a plan for improving the quality, accessibility and use of their estates.
18. Nature engagement and connection should be encouraged. Nature connection can be developed and strengthened through a variety of pathways and ways of engaging with the natural world, including through sensory contact with the natural world, finding an emotional bond with, and love

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5663018/#r5>

<sup>27</sup> [https://www.wcl.org.uk/docs/Public\\_access\\_is\\_a\\_public\\_good-ELM\\_Link\\_briefing\\_Nov21.pdf](https://www.wcl.org.uk/docs/Public_access_is_a_public_good-ELM_Link_briefing_Nov21.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.wcl.org.uk/docs/Link%20response%20to%20Glover%20Review%20FINAL%202008.04.2022.pdf>

for, nature, taking time to appreciate the beauty of nature, thinking about the meaning and signs of nature, and showing compassion and care for nature.<sup>29</sup>

- a. Within the education system, climate and sustainability should have a place in every subject in the curriculum at all levels and in all settings. Outdoor learning as a framework for learning should be integrated across all subjects. A portion of every school day should be spent outside. Teacher training and support for teachers for climate education and for outdoor learning will be necessary to embed these in the education system in order to address poor attainment (outdoor learning has been proved to improve attainment) and improve the health and wellbeing of pupils.
- b. Green social prescribing is an approach that has the opportunity to deliver systems change to facilitate nature connection, deliver improved mental health and wellbeing and alleviate pressure on health services. We welcome the green social prescribing pilots in England and suggest extending the length of the pilots and extending the program to other areas in England. With sufficient funding for coordination and to implement projects, green social prescribing has the potential to be transformative for the health and social care system, for nature's recovery, and for people's health and wellbeing. Nature-based care should be the new gold standard of care within the health and social care system.
- c. A cross departmental approach and understanding of the current opportunities to improve physical activity and access to nature is essential in supporting people's mental health and wellbeing. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is currently leading on a refresh of the Government's sports strategy Sporting Futures. This provides an important opportunity for the sports strategy to compliment and integrate with the new Mental Health and Wellbeing Plan to ensure the Government's approach to sport, physical activity and health and wellbeing are truly cross departmental.

#### **How can we support different sectors within local areas to work together, and with people within their local communities, to improve population wellbeing?**

*This includes a wide range of public services, including education settings, social care, the NHS, voluntary sectors, housing associations and businesses.*

- 19. An integrated approach across Government departments, across sectors, and across communities is essential to improving mental health and wellbeing through nature-based solutions.
- 20. In order to integrate and prioritise access to a healthy natural environment, nature-rich spaces and nature connection across all Government departments, we suggest a levelling up mission on access to nature in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. This specified mission would secure and maintain a ministerial focus on increasing nature on people's doorsteps, enriching lives and improving health outcomes.<sup>30</sup>
- 21. We also recommend including a new duty on local authorities, public bodies and developers to provide increased and more equitable access to high quality natural spaces for everyone. Local authorities should set local standards for access to nature, informed by Natural England's Green Infrastructure Standards, and assess progress against these standards, with the overall aim of increasing publicly accessible high quality green and blue spaces for residents to enjoy and receive

---

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.derby.ac.uk/news/2021/new-guide-shows-the-pathways-to-a-stronger-connection-with-nature/>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.wcl.org.uk/docs/Briefing%20for%20Commons%20Committee%20Day%201%20-%20Levelling%20Up%20Missions.pdf>

the positive health and wellbeing benefits.<sup>31</sup> This would help integrate access to nature and health and wellbeing considerations into the planning system.

22. Green social prescribing is also an important approach, tackling the wider social and ecological determinants of health and linking the health and social care system with the environment sector and community organisations. We welcome the green social prescribing pilots in England and suggest extending the length of the pilots and extending the program to other areas in England. With sufficient funding for coordination and to implement projects, green social prescribing has the potential to be transformative for the health and social care system, for nature's recovery, and for people's health and wellbeing.

**What is the most important thing we need to address in order to reduce the numbers of people who experience mental ill-health?**

*This might include actions which can be taken by national and local government, public services such as education settings, social care, the NHS, and the private and voluntary sectors.*

*Please provide your suggestions in relation to different groups: a) Infants and their parents or primary caregivers, b) Children and young people, c) Working age adults, d) Older adults, e) People that are more likely to experience mental ill-health (see Annex A)*

No response.

**Do you have ideas for how employers can support and protect the mental health of their employees?**

No response.

**What is the most important thing we need to address in order to prevent suicide?**

*This might include actions which can be taken by national and local government, public services such as education settings, social care, the NHS, and private and voluntary sectors.*

*Please provide your suggestions in relation to different groups: a) Children and young people, b) Working age adults, c) Older adults, d) People that are at greater risk of suicide (see Annex A)*

No response.

**Where would you prefer to get early support for your mental health if you were struggling?**

*Please tick all that apply: from family and friends, from the NHS, from your local authority, from an education setting, from a social care provider, in your community, from the voluntary and community sector, from your workplace, from digital-based support or advice, from the private sector, for example by paying for counselling, don't mind – as long as the support is high-quality, other – please specify.*

No response.

**What more can the NHS do to help people struggling with their mental health to access support early?**

---

<sup>31</sup>

[https://www.wcl.org.uk/assets/uploads/img/files/Advocacy\\_Briefing\\_Nature\\_for\\_Everyone\\_campaign\\_Spring\\_2022.pdf](https://www.wcl.org.uk/assets/uploads/img/files/Advocacy_Briefing_Nature_for_Everyone_campaign_Spring_2022.pdf)

*Please provide your suggestions in relation to different groups: a) Infants and their parents or primary caregivers, b) Children and young people, c) Working age adults, d) Older adults, e) Groups who face additional barriers to accessing support for their mental health*

No response.

**Do you have any suggestions for how the rest of society can better identify and respond to signs of mental ill-health?**

*Yes or no. If yes, please share your ideas.*

*You might want to consider community bodies, public services and private and community sectors. We are particularly interested in how society and different sectors can work together to get people support early.*

*Please provide your suggestions in relation to different groups: a) Infants and their parents or primary caregivers, b) Children and young people, c) Working age adults, d) Older adults, e) Groups who face additional barriers to accessing support*

No response.

**How can we ensure that people with wider health problems get appropriate mental health support at an early stage if they are struggling?**

*You might want to consider barriers faced by individuals, as well as how health and social care services engage with those people.*

No response.

**What needs to happen to ensure the best care and treatment is more widely available within the NHS?**

*We want to hear about the most important issues to address in order to improve NHS mental health care and treatment over the next 10 years.*

*We would be grateful for views on: a) Infants and their parents or primary caregivers, b) Children and young people, c) Working age adults, d) Older adults, e) Groups who report worse experiences and outcomes from NHS mental health services (see Annex A)*

No response.

**What is the NHS currently doing well and should continue to support people with their mental health?**

No response.

**What should be our priorities for future research, innovation and data improvements over the coming decade to drive better treatment outcomes?**

*We would be grateful for views on priorities for research across the life course, including: a) Infants and their parents or primary caregivers, b) Children and young people, c) Working age adults, d) Older adults, e) Groups*

**who have worse experiences in NHS mental health services, and/or often do not experience good outcomes (see Annex A)**

No response.

**What should inpatient mental health care look like in 10 years' time, and what needs to change in order to realise that vision?**

No response.

**What do we (as a society) need to do or change in order to improve the lives of people living with mental health conditions?**

*You might want to consider priorities at national and local government, wider public services such as social care and education settings, and the private and voluntary and community sectors*

*We would be grateful for input relating to: a) Infants and their parents or primary caregivers, b) Children and young people, c) Working age adults, d) Older adults, e) Groups who face additional barriers to accessing support*

No response.

**What things have the biggest influence on your mental health and influence your quality of life?**

*Please tick all that apply: housing, provision of social care, employment and job security, money and debt management, social and family relationships, physical health, connection to your community, other – please specify.*

No response.

**What more can we do to improve the physical health of people living with mental health conditions?**

*This will support our ambition to reduce the gap in life expectancy between people with severe mental illness and the general population.*

No response.

**How can we support sectors to work together to improve the quality of life of people living with mental health conditions?**

*We would be grateful for input relating to: a) Infants and their parents or primary caregivers, b) Children and young people, c) Working age adults, d) Older adults, e) Groups who face additional barriers to accessing support*

No response.

**What can we change at a system level to ensure that individuals with co-occurring mental health and drug and alcohol issues encounter 'no wrong door' in their access to all relevant treatment and support?**

*This includes people in contact with the criminal justice system.*

No response.

**What can we do to improve the immediate help available to people in crisis?**

*We want to hear from people who have experienced a mental health crisis, to understand what help you need. We also want to hear from those who work or have worked within services who support people experiencing a mental health crisis.*

*We are interested in ways to embed ‘best practice’ of multi-agency working, considering the role of the NHS, social work and social care, the voluntary and community sector, local government, education settings and the police.*

*Please consider: a) Children and young people, b) Working age adults, c) Older adults, d) Groups who face additional barriers to accessing support*

No response.

**How can we improve the support offer for people after they experience a mental health crisis?**

*We want to hear from people who have experienced a mental health crisis, to understand what help you need. We also want to hear from those who work or have worked within services who support people experiencing a mental health crisis.*

*Please consider: a) Children and young people, b) Working age adults, c) Older adults, d) Groups who face additional barriers to accessing support*

No response.

**What would enable local services to work together better to improve support for people during and after an experience of mental health crisis?**

*We would like you to consider the range of public services involved in crisis support, including the police and NHS services, as well as voluntary and community sector and businesses.*

No response.

**What do you think are the most important issues that a new, 10-year national mental health plan needs to address?**

*Please tick all that apply: wellbeing and health promotion, prevention, early intervention and service access, treatment quality and safety, quality of life for those living with mental health conditions, crisis care and support, stigma, other – please specify.*

*Please explain your choice.*

No response.

**What ‘values’ or ‘principles’ should underpin the plan as a whole?**

No response.

**How can we support local systems to develop and implement effective mental health plans for their local populations?**

*You might want to consider barriers local systems currently face, as well as enablers which would support more effective ways of working.*

No response.

**How can we improve data collection and sharing to help plan, implement and monitor improvements to mental health and wellbeing?**

No response.

**For questions or further information, please contact:**

Emma Clarke, Policy and Information Coordinator, Wildlife and Countryside Link

T: 020 8078 3581

E: [emma.clarke@wcl.org.uk](mailto:emma.clarke@wcl.org.uk)