

# Executive Summary



Mental Health  
Foundation





## **Changing minds, changing lives**

The Mental Health Foundation is a UK charity that relies on public donations and grant funding to deliver and campaign for good mental health for all.

Our work helps people across the UK to understand, protect and sustain their mental wellbeing, no matter what life throws at them. We work with other charities to move the issue up the national agenda, pressing for mental health to be given the same priority as physical health, and to deliver the necessary changes for improved access to mental health services. We make our research and information available online to inform and engage the public, businesses and campaigners across the health, education and community sectors in advocacy to strengthen our call for change.

Prevention is at the heart of what we do, because the best way to deal with a crisis is to prevent it from happening in the first place. For example, by providing the right information, guidance and support in childhood and adolescence, the chances of developing mental health problems can be reduced for millions of people over a lifetime, with enormous benefits to the individuals directly affected, along with their families, friends and the communities they live in. In particular, we help people to access information about steps they can take to reduce their mental health risks, increase their resilience, and feel empowered to take action when problems are at an early stage. We have a long history of working directly with people across the life course, including families, children and young people, those in later life, and those who are at high risk of developing mental health problems, such as people with learning disabilities.

The bare facts speak for themselves: one in four adults and one in ten children are likely to have a mental health problem in any year.<sup>i</sup> This can have a profound impact on the lives of tens of millions of people in the UK, and can affect their ability to sustain relationships, work, or just get through the day. The economic cost to the UK is £70 to £100 billion a year.<sup>ii</sup> Equally challenging is the estimate that only about a quarter of people with a mental health problem receive ongoing treatment,<sup>iii</sup> leaving the majority of people grappling with mental health issues on their own, seeking help or information, and dependent on the informal support of family, friends or colleagues.

i. The Health & Social Care Information Centre, 2009, Adult psychiatric morbidity in England, [Results of a household survey](#)

ii. OECD 2014: <http://www.oecd.org/els/emp/MentalHealthWork-UnitedKingdom-AssessmentRecommendations.pdf>

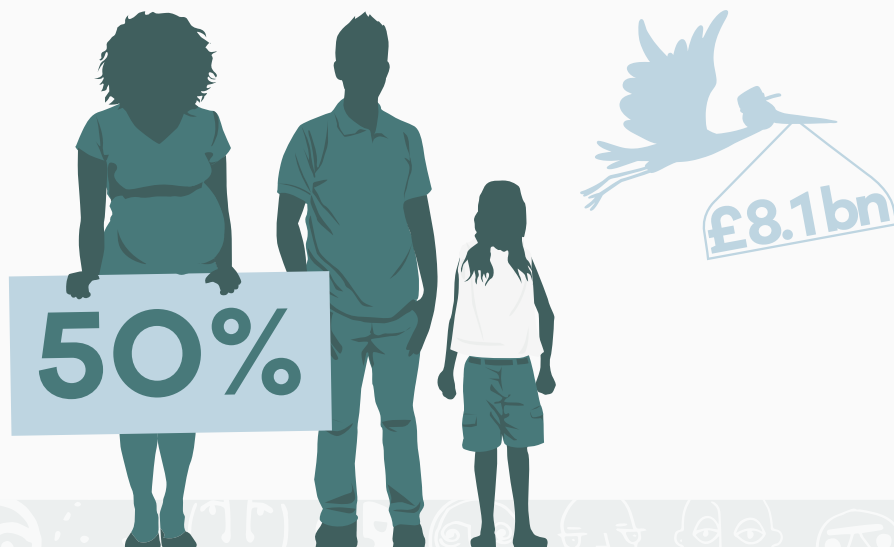
iii. The Health & Social Care Information Centre, 2009, Adult psychiatric morbidity in England, [Results of a household survey](#)

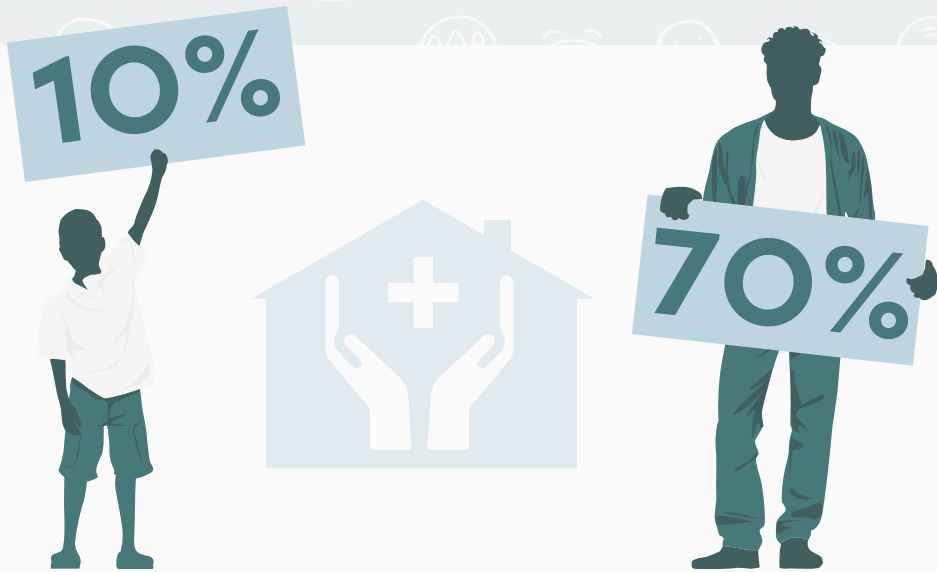
# Executive summary



## A selection of our topline facts in each chapter are presented below:

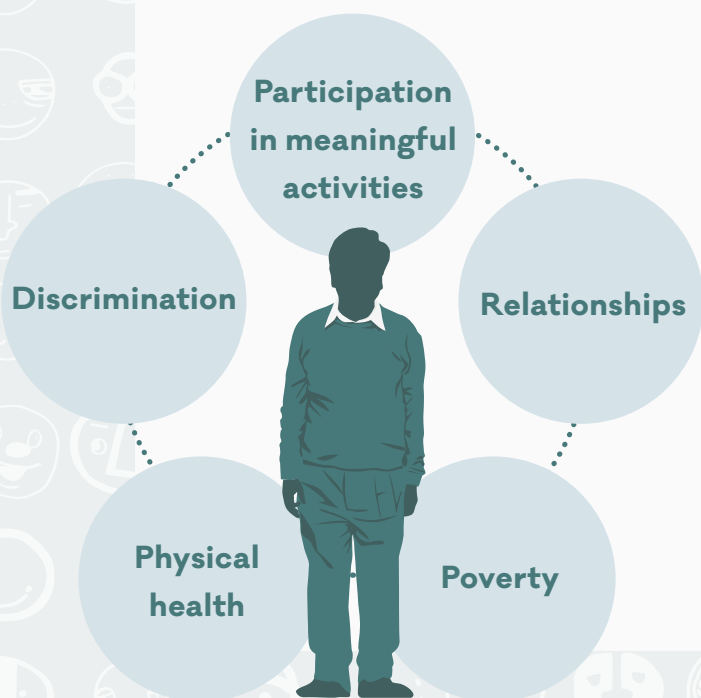
- Mental health problems are one of the main causes of the burden of disease worldwide.<sup>1</sup> In the UK, they are responsible for the largest burden of disease – 28% of the total burden, compared to 16% each for cancer and heart disease.<sup>2</sup>
- One in four people in the UK will experience a mental health problem in any given year.<sup>3</sup>
- Mental health services in the UK are overstretched, have long waiting times and in some regions lack specialist services. Despite this, public spending is focused almost entirely on coping with crisis, with only an insignificant investment in prevention.<sup>4</sup> Mental health research receives only 5.5% (£115 million) of total UK health research spending.<sup>5</sup>
- Around 50% of women with perinatal mental health problems are not identified or treated. The costs to the UK economy for untreated perinatal mental health problems is estimated to be around £8.1 billion for each one-year cohort of births; this is the equivalent to around £10,000 per year for every single birth in the UK. These costs are generally the result of not identifying mothers' mental health needs or treating them effectively.<sup>6</sup> However, when mothers are referred, there are known treatments that work well for most cases.<sup>7</sup>
- Paternal mental health is also of crucial importance. Postnatal depression in fathers has been associated with emotional and behavioural problems in their child.<sup>8</sup>





- Ten per cent of children and young people (aged 5-16 years) have a clinically diagnosable mental problem<sup>9</sup> yet 70% of children and adolescents who experience mental health problems have not had appropriate interventions at a sufficiently early age.<sup>10</sup>

- In England, women are more likely than men to have a common mental health problem<sup>11</sup> and are almost twice as likely to be diagnosed with anxiety disorders.<sup>12</sup>
- In Scotland, it was found that in 2012-2013 nearly one in ten (9%) adults had two or more symptoms of depression or anxiety.<sup>13</sup>
- The Office for National Statistics (ONS) found that, in 2013, 6,233 suicides were recorded in the UK for people aged 15 and older. Of these, 78% were male and 22% were female.<sup>14</sup>
- A 2006 UK Inquiry identified 5 key factors that affect mental health and wellbeing of older people, these were: discrimination, participation in meaningful activities, relationships, physical health and poverty.<sup>15</sup>





- Common mental health problems such as depression and anxiety are distributed according to a gradient of economic disadvantage across society<sup>16</sup> with the poorer and more disadvantaged disproportionately affected from common mental health problems and their adverse consequences.<sup>17,18,19</sup>
- Mental health problems constitute the largest single source of world economic burden, with an estimated global cost of £1.6 trillion (or US\$2.5 trillion) – greater than cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease, cancer, and diabetes on their own.<sup>20</sup> In the UK, the estimated costs of mental health problems are between £70-£100 billion each year and accounts for 4.5% of GDP.<sup>21</sup>
- In the UK, 70 million days are lost from work each year due to mental ill health (i.e. anxiety, depression and stress related conditions), making it the leading cause of sickness absence.<sup>22</sup>
- There are strong links between physical and mental health problems. A 2012 report by The King's Fund found that 30% of people with a long-term physical health problem also had a mental health problem and 46% of people with a mental health problem also had a long-term physical health problem.<sup>23</sup>



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