The evidence for prevention throughout our lives

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‘We all have mental health’
Impact of childhood mental health problems

- All childhood mental health problems increase later risk
- 75% adults with mental health problems first unwell in childhood or adolescence
- Childhood mental health problems also increase risk of other difficulties in life
- Range of effective solutions to promote wellbeing and protect children’s mental health
For every 1,000 children...

Every child can benefit from help to have the best start and promote mental health, resilience and coping skills.

One child in 1,000 will have a very serious problem requiring hospital care.

About 17 children may have serious diagnosable difficulties needing specialist treatment.

Around 150 children in 1,000 may need extra help to prevent later crises.

70 children may have common diagnosable problems and need effective help.

Figure 4: The Centre’s adaptation of Kurtz’s methodology for evaluating the local scale of mental health need.
Maternal mental health

Growing evidence of impact of mothers’ mental health during and after pregnancy on their children

Cost £8.1 billion a year:
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Psychosis
Maternal mental health support

- Identification is essential, eg by:
  - GPs
  - Midwives
  - Health Visitors

- But only 10% women with postnatal depression get evidence-based treatment
Early starting behavioural problems

- All children misbehave from time to time
- But about 20% have persistent ‘behavioural problems’
- And 6% have ‘conduct disorder’
- The lifetime costs of conduct disorder are £250,000 per child
- Most parents ask for help
- But few families receive any...
Proven interventions for behavioural problems

- Evidence-based group parenting programmes
- Cost £1,300 per child
- Strong evidence of effectiveness

"You get stuck in a rut for so long that it takes going somewhere and talking to other people to put everything into perspective. From the first session I was looking forward to coming back."
The importance of schools

- First major influence on child’s mental health outside family
- Opportunity to mitigate negative influences and reinforce positives
- Major risk of bullying to mental health
- Concerns about school stress & exam pressures
Whole school approach

- Social and Emotional Learning
- Anti-bullying programmes
- Access to counselling and parenting support
- Staff training and awareness
- Easy, quick links to specialist support

- Mentally Healthy Schools portal provides easy access to advice & information
Young people with greatest risks

- Children who bully *and* get bullied
- Children of parents with mental health problems
- Children affected by neglect, violence and maltreatment
- Children living in persistent poverty
- Children with disabilities and health problems
- LGBT young people
Business cost of mental health £1,300 per employee (£35bn nationwide)

Large numbers lose jobs or miss out in labour market

But effective management can cut costs and be good business

And effective employment support can help more people into work
Insecure housing and homelessness are major risk factors for poor mental health.

Problem debt and poor mental health have strong links in both directions.

Early identification of housing and financial difficulties (e.g., Council Tax arrears) is crucial.

High quality welfare advice provides big returns on investment.
Suicide prevention

- Three-quarters of suicides among people not in contact with mental health services
- ‘Zero suicide’ approach:
  - Training in communities
  - Awareness and stigma reduction
  - Prevention at high risk locations
  - Family support
  - Preventing recurrences
  - Working with coroners
Later life

- Isolation and loneliness
- Poorer physical health & reduced mobility
- High levels of (undiagnosed) depression
- Opportunities for social prescribing & use of community assets
Barriers to prevention

- ‘Limited evidence base’
- Public health funding cuts
- Other public health priorities
- Crisis management: ‘not enough beds’
- Complexity
How do we get past the barriers?

- Champions: to make the case and not let go
- Policy impetus: national support for local action
- Clear case: actionable ideas that work & offer value for money
- Partnership and coproduction: including with communities
Putting prevention into practice

- Prevention Concordat for Better Mental Health: resources including JSNA toolkit & return on investment
- Mental Health Challenge: elected members championing mental health
- Equally Well: working for equal physical health
Thank you

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