



Office of the
Deputy Prime Minister

Creating sustainable communities

Count Me In

Making life better for people with mental health problems

An easy to read version of the
Social Exclusion Unit Report



Written with the help of

MENCAP

Understanding learning disability



Social
Exclusion
Unit

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Useful words

Mental health problem

People with mental health problems have problems in the way they think, feel or behave. This can make their relationships, their work and their lives difficult.

Social exclusion

When people are left out of doing things that other people do. This could be things like not going to work or not taking part in leisure activities.

Social Exclusion Unit

A government team. It tries to make sure groups of people are not left out of doing things that other people do.

Community

The people who live in a local area.

Discrimination

When people are treated badly because of something that is different about them. This could be something like having a disability.



What is this report about?

The Social Exclusion Unit has done a study looking at mental health. It spoke to lots of people, visited mental health projects and read reports about mental health.



It has now written this report saying what should happen to make things better for people with mental health problems.

Why do we need to do something about mental health and social exclusion?



People with mental health problems are often left out of things other people do. Even though many people with mental health problems want to work, not many do work. Many people with mental health problems do not have things to do in the daytime, and they spend their time alone. This is called **social exclusion**.

Being left out of doing things makes mental health problems worse. It sometimes leads to suicide (when people kill themselves).

Mental health problems cost the country a lot of money.



We spend about £77 billion a year on things like providing care for people with mental health problems.



If we did more to help people before their mental health problems got very bad, we would save money. It would also mean that people with mental health problems would have the chance to work and take part in things that other people do in the community. This would make their lives better.

Why are people with mental health problems left out of things other people do?



We think there are 5 main reasons why people with mental health problems are left out of things.

- People with mental health problems are sometimes treated badly because they have a mental health problem. This is called discrimination.
- People often think that people with mental health problems cannot achieve very much.
- It is not clear whose job it is to help people with mental health problems to take part in things in the community.
- People do not have enough support to help them get a job or keep a job.
- People can find it hard to get good housing and transport. They can also find it hard to take part in arts and sports.



Some people also face extra problems getting the things they need. These are people like young men and people from some ethnic minority communities.



What is happening about mental health at the moment?



There is some important work to improve mental health taking place at the moment. There are also some important laws to protect people with mental health problems, like the Disability Discrimination Act.

This is a good start. But we need to do more.



What we want to do



The Social Exclusion Unit has written an **action plan**. We think that the things in the action plan will:

- make sure that government departments and other organisations work together to help people with mental health problems
- make sure people are not treated badly because they have a mental health problem
- help people with mental health problems to find jobs or do the things they want to do
- help people with mental health problems take part in more activities with other people.



The action plan

There are 6 main things we want to do:



1 Stop people being treated badly because they have a mental health problem (this is called discrimination)

We will do this through things like:

- teaching people about mental health problems so they understand them and do not treat people badly
- teaching children in schools about mental health problems
- making sure people follow the laws that say they must treat all disabled people fairly.



2 Make sure staff who work in health and social care help people with mental health problems to take part in activities

We will do this through things like:

- making sure people get a service that meets their own needs
- changing day services so they help people with mental health problems do things in their community.



3 Give people with mental health problems a real chance to get a job that is right for them

We will do this through things like:

- giving better training about mental health to Jobcentre Plus staff (staff who help people find a job)
- telling people about *Access to Work* – a scheme that gives money so employers can help people with mental health problems at work
- thinking about how we can make sure people with mental health problems who are on benefits will have more money if they start going to work.



4 Make sure people with a mental health problem can take part in the local community

We will do this through things like:

- making sure people have support to learn and do training
- showing that it can be really good for people with mental health problems to take part in arts and leisure activities
- giving support to families to help parents with mental health problems and their children.



5 Make sure people with mental health problems have things like a good home and good transport

We will do this through things like:

- helping housing authorities to rent homes to people with mental health problems
- making sure people with mental health problems are helped to use public transport.



6 Make sure we do the things in the action plan!

We will do this through things like:

- being clear about who is going to do the things in the action plan
- setting up a group to tell the Government what things have been done
- working together with voluntary groups.

What happens now?

Lots of people need to work together to make the action plan happen. This includes:

- the Government
- people who have or have had mental health problems
- voluntary groups
- employers.

This report is just the start of lots of work on mental health. We want people with mental health problems to have the same chances to work and take part in things like everyone else.

Find out more:

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RETHINK National advice line
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