



MHFA England

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Prime Minister

10 Downing Street
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Date: 11 September 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

The decision by government to establish a National Institute for Health Protection has been taken and the Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) England community is keen to ensure that the important functions carried out by Public Health England, in relation to the promotion of public mental health, will be maintained.

MHFA England is a social enterprise on a mission to train 1 in 10 of the adult population in mental health knowledge, skills and awareness. Our 2,700 strong Instructor Members come from all walks of life and bring different expertise and lived experience to the work we do. We work together with colleagues in the public, private and statutory sector with shared goals of improving the public health of the nation and putting mental health on an equal footing with physical health.

Firstly, we would like to put on record our thanks and appreciation for the work of colleagues in Public Health England. Along with colleagues in NHS England they have played a significant role in shifting public attitudes and understanding, developing policy, legislation and partnerships and securing investment. A hallmark of their approach has also been collaboration with the social enterprise, voluntary and charity sector.

We urge you to ensure that a focused lens on the physical impact of the Coronavirus pandemic does not limit the attention paid to the mental health impacts of the virus and risk a backwards step in policy, investment and outcomes.

What does that mean in practice at a national level?

- Ensure that improving mental health is part of the National Institute’s primary purpose, with a clear plan and measurable outcomes focused on the psycho-social and mental health impacts of the Coronavirus
- A strong focus and commitment by government to the mental health of everyone, underpinned by an understanding of how systemic inequalities including racism impact on mental health and wellbeing, and a prioritisation of investment in those impacted most by poor mental health
- Sustained commitment to the ground-breaking Every Mind Matters initiative. This is the first ever national public mental health campaign, with investment around prevention and early intervention, and it would be a fundamental error for this initiative to be stopped
- A requirement to working in partnership with partners in the Health system and the social enterprise, voluntary and community sector to maximise effectiveness and impact.

We also urge you to ensure that the forthcoming Spending Review both protects and enhances funding for Local Authority funding around public mental health prevention and early intervention. And in doing so ensure that the money is used for that purpose through ringfencing or another appropriate mechanism.

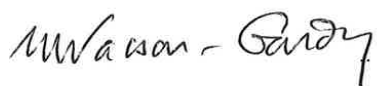
We have made so much progress over the last decade. That progress must be sustained and built on through the transition from Public Health England to the new National Institute for Health Protection. The financial, social and human cost of not doing so is too great.

I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,



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Professor Mark Watson Gandy
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