



 mind

We are Mind



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Foreword

Over the past 75 years, Mind has transformed public attitudes and the quality of mental health support. It's done it by standing shoulder-to-shoulder with people who have mental health problems.

But there has not been enough progress. Too many of us still have to fight to get help. We have our opinions dismissed and trauma ignored. We face discrimination at work and in healthcare. We find ourselves in an increasingly unequal society.

There was already a mental health emergency before coronavirus. But the pandemic has increased the scale of need and entrenched inequalities in the nation's mental health.

Mind's Lived Experience Strategy Steering Group brings people together from a diverse range of communities to tackle this shared challenge. We have drawn on our personal experiences of mental health problems to shape Mind's new strategy.

At a time when so many of us have felt hopeless and frustrated, this

experience has given us hope that we can make a difference to a society and a mental health system that has let us down in the past.

We know first hand that young people, people living in poverty and people from racialised communities have the highest mental health needs and some of the worst experiences of support. They have also experienced the biggest decline in mental health during the pandemic. Frankly, Mind has not done enough to support these groups or tackle the overlapping challenges they face. Therefore we recommended that these groups are given particular focus in the new strategy.

Mind's services will continue to provide life-changing support for millions of people each year. Its campaigning work will hold the government to account in a wide range of policy areas – from the new Mental Health Act to welfare reform. However, in a difficult economic environment, we have prioritised increasing Mind's impact on marginalised groups rather than increasing overall reach.

There is no vaccine for mental health problems. Addressing the mental health emergency will require a long-term, collective effort. Mind's work to connect minds – bringing people together to drive change in their own communities – is so important in a world where it feels like people are more isolated and divided than ever before.

We have made decisions together and challenged Mind's leadership at the highest level. But we must not stop here. Mind needs to create more opportunities for those of us with lived experience of mental health problems to lead its work and amplify the experiences of those that are too often ignored.

Lived Experience

Strategy Steering Group

Carina, Fikile, Habiba, Julie, Loren, Michael, Paol, Pat, Steve, Thasnim and other members who have chosen to remain anonymous



Our vision

We won't give up until everyone experiencing a mental health problem gets both support and respect.

Our purpose

We are Mind.

We connect minds

We bring people together to make change in their communities.

We support minds

We deliver life-changing support.

We change minds

We speak out and demand better from policymakers and the public.

We're here to fight for mental health.

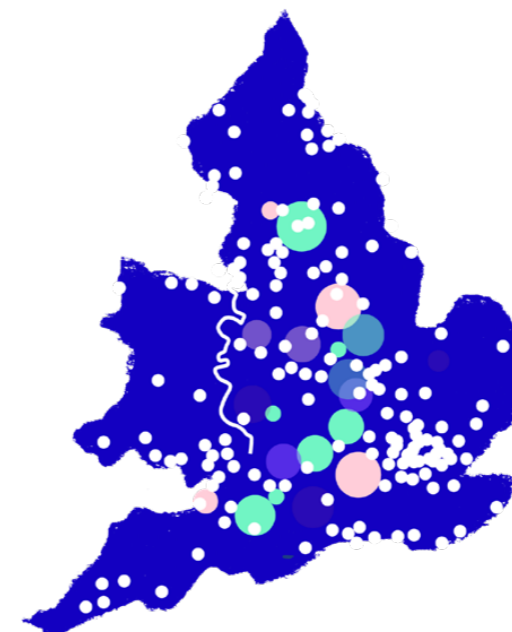
For support. For respect. For you.

Our fundamentals

- Our work will always respond to the needs and preferences of people with mental health problems.
- We put people first. So our work isn't defined by mental health diagnoses.
- We are committed to anti-racism.
- The Mind federation supports people across England and Wales. We also work closely with partners in Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- We're focused on supporting people aged 11 and over.

Who we are

The Mind federation includes the national charity, Mind Retail, and a network of over 100 local Minds in communities across England and Wales. We are united by our common purpose. Our work is enabled by the generosity of funders and supporters.



Since the start of Mind's last strategy (April 2016):

Our mental health information has been accessed over **14 million times** each year



Local Minds have provided life-changing support to over

300,000 people per year



On average, our online peer support community has been used by over

100,000 people each year



We are Mind

And over the last few years, we've come a long way.

Mental health is not hidden anymore. It's on the front pages. It's on the political agenda. It's discussed at the dinner table. For millions of people, mental health is now something to be honest about – not ashamed of.

The Mind community – including our generous funders and supporters – has been at the heart of this transformation. Together, we've shown what mental health really looks like, what support makes it better and what needs to change.

But there's still so much more that needs to be done.

Waiting lists are far too long. People are pushed into poverty because of their mental health. The mental health system is failing racialised communities. And a generation of young people are dealing with anxiety, trauma and self-harm.

The pandemic has exposed the realities of mental health support for millions. People's rights aren't respected. Access to care is a lottery. And the risk of more mental health problems emerging is growing by the day.

That's why we are reaffirming our commitment to fight for mental health. For support. For respect. For you.

That's why we'll offer more mental health support for people living in poverty – increasing workplace support for people in low-paid jobs and campaigning for welfare changes so people are treated fairly and have the resources to meet their needs.

That's why we'll target the injustices in the mental health system to remove shameful differences in service access and outcomes for people from racialised communities.





That's why we'll work to ensure that every young person learns about mental health. We'll join with whole school communities – from parents to pupils to teachers – and make sure young people are able to easily access support when they need it.

Whether you want support at school, at work, in your community or through the NHS, we'll fight to make sure help is there for you.

The scale of this challenge requires a collective effort. We're bringing together our unstoppable network of local Minds across England and Wales. We'll also partner with people and organisations who share our ambitions.

We'll speak out when things aren't right. We'll use our platform to amplify the voices of people who are too often dismissed and ignored. And we'll ensure that politicians' promises deliver real progress.

We'll use the expertise and experiences of people with mental health problems to design new life-changing services. And we'll continue to provide information to millions of people – helping them get support, assert their rights and feel hopeful.

At Mind, we never stand still. We have always taken on the biggest threats to our mental health. We won't give up until everyone experiencing a mental health problem gets both support and respect.

“If it wasn't for Mind I'd be lost, or I wouldn't be alive to be completely honest with you.”

Nadine, Mind service user



Four ways we'll deliver this strategy:

1

We **connect** minds

2

We **support** Minds

3

We **change** minds

4

Together we are Mind

Driven forward by our unstoppable community, this is how we'll turn the ambition in this strategy into a life-changing reality.

We connect minds

No one can take on this mental health emergency alone. But, as the nation's leading mental health charity, we can connect people and organisations who want to join the fight for mental health.

We'll create more inclusive spaces – locally and nationally – that make it easier for adults and young people with mental health problems to lead our work.

- We want more people to feel able to make a difference – to our work, to their own lives and to the world around them.
- So we'll create safe, inclusive spaces to make it easier for young people and adults to shape what we do and to influence change locally and nationally.

“I'm less isolated. I have options. I know that I'm understood tacitly because everyone's in the same boat. I can be with people without having to explain myself or justify why I'm there.”

Anonymous, peer support group member

We'll work with partners to share learning and generate new ideas to help address the most complex issues and tackle injustices in the mental health system.

- We'll build new national partnerships with organisations run by and for people living in poverty, racialised communities and young people. Together, we'll share knowledge, resources and big ideas to tackle the most complex social issues.
- We'll make those big ideas count locally, by providing grants to local Minds and other community organisations who can test new ways of working.
- We'll work with our current partners – including Co-op, ITV, Rethink Mental Illness and Diverse Cymru – to encourage more people to join the fight for mental health.

We'll continue to support the peer support movement and provide somewhere safe to give and receive peer support 24/7.

- Connecting with people who really get what you're going through can transform how you feel. Giving support to others also improves your own wellbeing. It is so powerful to draw on your own experiences to help others. So we'll keep championing the power of community-led peer support.
- Through our own Side by Side online community, we'll make sure tens of thousands of people have a safe place to find peer support – anytime and anywhere.

“The mental health emergency is so large and complex. We need a joined-up approach. Mind can get the important partners around the table with people who have mental health problems to jointly innovate how we overcome these challenges.”

Paol, Lived Experience Strategy Steering Group



We support minds

The pandemic has had an impact on the mental health of millions of people. Mind met this crisis head on by providing up-to-date information and launching new services – like the Our Frontline programme for key workers – to help people cope. And we've supported hundreds of thousands of people online and face-to-face through local Minds.

We'll offer life-changing mental health support – drawing on personal experiences and the best available evidence.

- Working shoulder-to-shoulder with people who have mental health problems helps us to design more engaging, effective and equitable services for the people who need them most. That might mean working in new ways with young Black men or rolling out our Active Monitoring service to deprived communities across Wales.
- We'll make sure that our support is truly inclusive. We want everyone – whatever their background – to feel welcome and supported by our services.

We'll provide an information service that helps people with mental health problems to get support, assert their rights and feel hopeful.

- In such uncertain times, people need clear advice from sources they trust. We are proud that our information service supports millions of people each year.
- We'll publish information that's relevant to more people – especially to racialised communities, young people and people living in poverty – so they can get the support they need, stand up for their rights and live their lives fully.
- We'll join with partners and with our shops to make sure more people than ever can get hold of our information in convenient locations, offline and online.

We'll work with employers and schools to create thriving places to work and learn for all – especially those with mental health problems.

- We'll build on our workplace wellbeing activities with employers, focusing support on sectors that employ many people on low incomes.
- In schools and universities, we'll build on our recent progress so thousands more students, staff, parents and carers can talk more openly about mental health and get support when they need it.
- We'll test new ways of helping young people – from innovative support for those stuck on mental health waiting lists to providing talking therapies you can access from home.

“Local Minds can be life changing. If you don't know where to go, or don't know where to start, the local help they provide is so important.”

Georgia, Youth Voice Advisory Panel



We change minds

People need support right now, but they also need long-term change to the way society views mental health. We fight for better services and rights for people with mental health problems. And we push to improve the public's attitudes to mental health and their level of understanding. Through this strategy, we'll speak out boldly in the face of injustice – to make sure we can all get support and respect.

We'll speak out when things aren't right and demand mental health support that respects our rights, keeps us safe and gives us hope – regardless of our background.

- We're not here for warm words or hollow promises. The UK and Welsh governments need to fulfil the commitments they made in the Long Term Plan and Wales Mental Health Strategy to build better, more equal mental health services.
- The Mental Health Act also needs urgent reform, so we'll push for changes that respect our rights and guarantee better support for young people and racialised communities.
- And we'll campaign to make sure young people can easily get support to deal with the impact of trauma – instead of having to join long waiting lists.

We'll lock in improvements in public attitudes towards mental health – with a focus on the least understood experiences.

- Attitudes to mental health have come a long way, but stigma is still a big issue – especially around the least understood mental health problems.
- So we'll extend the Time to Change anti-stigma campaign in Wales, focusing on stigma experienced by people in poverty and racialised communities.
- We'll keep Time to Talk Day growing in England and Wales, to help break through negative attitudes that still haven't died away.
- We'll keep building links with media organisations to make sure mental health is shown in a realistic and non-stigmatising way.
- And we'll campaign for mental health to be an essential part of the curriculum so talking about it becomes normal for all young people.

We'll campaign for a robust financial safety net that prevents us getting trapped in poverty when we are unwell.

- No one should be trapped in poverty because of their mental health problems. So we'll campaign harder than ever for fundamental welfare reform that creates an effective financial safety net.
- And we'll deliver innovative new projects to improve the way financial services providers support customers' mental health.

We'll share our platform with people who are too often ignored, so they can be a powerful force for change – with Mind as a partner.

- By working with a more diverse range of celebrity ambassadors, media volunteers and media organisations, we'll share a more diverse range of mental health experiences.
- And we'll campaign unflinchingly for racial justice, to stop our mental health system being stacked against racialised communities.

“Who has the clout to stand up to the powers that be? Who can change legislation and public attitudes? Who has both the public confidence and respect, but also the experience to back it up? That is where I feel like Mind has a unique role. That is why I think that Mind can really change minds.”

Michael, Lived Experience Strategy Steering Group

Together, we are Mind

To respond to the mental health emergency, we must become a more inclusive and effective federation. We'll only be able to achieve our ambitions with the generous support of funders and supporters.

We'll work with our fantastic supporters to grow our income and encourage more people from diverse backgrounds to take part in our work.

- We'll launch new fundraising events and products to fire up our supporters. We'll motivate more people to donate to us through individual gifts and in their Wills. We'll reach new workplaces with wellbeing support that also boosts our income. And we'll build new partnerships with companies and funders who share our ambitions for mental health.
- We'll help our supporters become a powerful force for change, with Mind as a partner. And we'll create more opportunities for people from marginalised communities to shape Mind's work.
- We'll launch our refreshed brand to help Mind improve its reach and relevance to a much wider audience.
- We'll keep improving our online retail offer. And we'll make sure our local shops are welcoming places to find a bargain and find support.

We'll work shoulder-to-shoulder with local Minds to increase the impact of their life-changing services and local influence.

- We'll share great ideas across the local Mind network to keep improving the impact of the support we provide.
- We'll strengthen links between local Minds and our shops to help engage a wider range of people in their communities.
- And we'll help every local Mind to become stronger and more sustainable by supporting them to achieve the standards set out in the Mind Quality Mark.

We'll build a diverse workforce with an inclusive organisational culture – so we can be a great place to work for all.

- Led by our Race Equality in Mind initiative, we'll bring anti-racism to the core of who we are, what we do and how we do it.
- We'll continue to provide comprehensive support to protect the mental health and wellbeing of all our staff and volunteers.
- We'll learn from the experiences of the pandemic to ensure our systems and processes are as robust as possible, and we'll use the full potential of digital working.

“I think a lot of organisations and politicians say things about diversity and they put it on their websites. But I think that there is nothing more powerful or more vivid than seeing an organisation which is diverse, multicultural, with disabled people. And I think that Mind has a real responsibility in changing the face of mental health support.”

Fikile, Lived Experience Strategy Steering Group



Strategic development priorities

Our strategic development priorities are areas where we must significantly increase our attention and our investment to respond to urgent needs. All of our work – our support services, our campaigns, our partnerships and the way we work internally – will take into account these large, complex and interconnected challenges.

As we extend our work in these areas, we need to be humble and thoughtful – listening carefully, building partnerships and amplifying the voices of people with lived experience as they lead our work.

We need to earn the trust of the communities we seek to work with. We need to build our credibility. And we need to act decisively. This is a mental health emergency, and we must commit the necessary resources to respond to the urgency and scale of these issues.

We will become a truly anti-racist organisation

Right now, our mental health system is stacked against racialised communities. People from these communities are more likely to experience a mental health problem but less likely to receive the help they need.

Being there for everyone experiencing a mental health problem is fundamental to who we are.

But the disproportionate impact of the coronavirus pandemic on racialised communities, the tragic killing of George Floyd and the anti-racism protests that followed made us recognise where we'd been falling short.

We've built services, campaigned for and supported people from racialised communities. But individual projects and good intentions will only take us so far.

The deep-rooted inequalities in society and in the mental health system are also found within Mind. There are so many people we don't reach. Who don't see Mind as relevant to their lives. Who we haven't listened to hard enough or worked with closely enough.

To change this, we recognise that Mind needs to change – in terms of who we are as an organisation, how we support the mental health of people from racialised communities and how we acknowledge and challenge racism more widely.

It's already leading us to reflect on what stops people connecting with Mind. It's made us acknowledge the privileges that come with being White and the disadvantages that racialised communities are forced to face.

Our ambition is to become a truly anti-racist organisation. We'll be an unflinching advocate for racial justice and mental health. Our support will be engaging and effective for people from racialised communities. We'll invest in building an inclusive organisational culture with diverse leaders.

Our Race Equality in Mind Initiative will also look to deliver greater racial equity in our culture, our values, our structure, our decisions, the support we provide, our partnerships, our campaigns and the way all staff approach our roles.

We are partnering with organisations who have the experience and expertise to transform the mental health of racialised communities.

We have never been more determined to fight for better mental health for everyone – and to do that we must step up our fight against racism.



We will support young people – with a focus on trauma

The mental health needs of young people are increasing rapidly.

In 2017, one in ten young people had a mental health problem.

By 2020, it was one in six.

Young people have told us that trauma from abuse, bereavement, bullying and broken relationships is a major part of the problem. It's particularly affecting young women. Many young people don't feel able to ask for help. Those who do often end up stuck in mental health waiting lists that stretch for months or years.

The pandemic has sped up a crisis in young people's mental health that was already growing fast.

We've increased support not only for pupils but for parents, teachers and other school staff. We've built closer links with universities, helping students look out for their own and each other's mental health. And we've published new information so young people can better understand what they are experiencing and know where to look for help.

But we know this is only the beginning.

We want to stand alongside young people and stand up for their right to better support.

Our ambition is to become an influential advocate for young people's rights. We'll fight to ensure that all young people learn about mental health and can easily access trauma-informed mental health support, where and when they need it. We'll create more opportunities for young people to lead our work.

We know that by working together with young people, we can confront this crisis.

We have never been more determined to fight for better mental health – and to do that young people will be at the heart of our work.

We will fight for the mental health of people in poverty

People with mental health problems are more likely to end up in poverty. And people who live in poverty are more likely to have mental health problems.

This two-way link between mental health and poverty must be broken.

We know many of the people we support are on low incomes. It's why we've campaigned for years for a welfare system that doesn't trap people with mental health problems in poverty. And it's why many local Minds can be found in some of the most deprived communities in England and Wales.

But we need to do more.

The economic impact of the pandemic has led to massive job cuts. Millions of people find themselves in low-paid jobs and at risk of falling into poverty. It could be years before the economy recovers. We can't wait that long.

This is why the impact of poverty will be central to our work.

We need to reach more people in low-paid jobs, offering workplace support so people aren't afraid to seek help if they're struggling.

We need to campaign louder than ever for a welfare system that doesn't dismiss people's needs or add to their anguish. And we need to build stronger links with other organisations who are also fighting to end poverty.

Our ambition is to stop people with mental health problems getting trapped in poverty. We'll campaign for a robust welfare safety net. We'll become a leading provider of mental health financial inclusion advice and support. And we'll build strong partnerships to tackle the complex relationship between mental health and poverty at a community and individual level.

We have never been more determined to fight for better mental health – and to do that we have to fight harder for the mental health of people living in poverty.

What we'll achieve

With the generous support of funders and supporters, we will ensure that:

350,000

people receive life-changing services from local Minds each year



18.5 million

people access information each year that empowers them to get support, assert their rights and live their lives fully

100,000

people give and receive peer support through Side by Side Online



3 million

employees are offered workplace wellbeing support – with a focus on low-paid sectors



Mind becomes a truly

anti-racist organisation



– with diverse leaders, an inclusive organisational culture, no ethnic disparity in programme reach or outcomes and unflinching advocacy on racial justice and mental health

100,000

young people receive mental health support that takes trauma into account



Welfare systems

are reformed so that people with mental health problems are treated fairly and don't get trapped in poverty



Mental health commitments

in the Long Term Plan and Welsh Government Mental Health Strategy are delivered and the Mental Health Act is reformed – improving the quality and equity of access to mental health services



We'll use our performance framework to report on progress towards our strategic ambitions in a clear, transparent way.

Tackling the climate emergency

The climate emergency is a major risk to society and our mental health. And while it's not our charitable purpose to tackle the climate emergency, we must play our part in addressing its causes and adapting to its impact.

As such, we are committed to becoming a net climate positive charity. This means going beyond net zero and actively contributing to an equitable climate recovery. Many of our activities – especially within our retail network – already have a positive impact.

Throughout this strategy period, we'll report annually on our progress to respond to the climate emergency. And we'll continue to improve, learn from others and share what we learn.



How this strategy was developed

This strategy is the result of careful listening and reflection.

We have evaluated the impact of our previous work to identify our strengths and areas to improve. We have studied changes in mental health need – before and during the pandemic. We have listened to over 25,000 people with mental health problems, as well as funders and sector partners, who have shared their experiences and priorities for Mind's future work. We have worked together across the federation – at Mind, local Minds, and across the retail network – to develop solutions to the complex challenges we face.

The members of the Lived Experience Strategy Steering Group have used their expertise and insight to shape the strategy development process over the past 18 months. Mind's Youth Voice Network and Equality Leaders Group also provided invaluable input to help shape plans for the three strategic development priority areas.

We owe a special thanks to our Lived Experience Strategy Steering Group

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And those members who want to remain anonymous



Join the fight for better mental health!

Campaign with us

mind.org.uk/get-involved/become-a-campaigner

Donate to Mind

mind.org.uk/get-involved/donate-or-fundraise

Volunteer with us

mind.org.uk/get-involved/volunteering-participating

 [mindforbettermentalhealth](https://www.facebook.com/mindforbettermentalhealth)

 [MindCharity](https://twitter.com/MindCharity)

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