

## Finance Committee

### Prevention

#### Submission from Mental Health Foundation

Thank you for allowing us to submit evidence to the review after the deadline as discussed. To enable you to rapidly appraise this we have kept this paper very brief with links to wider reports and we are happy to provide fuller details in areas you are most interested in. The Mental Health Foundation has existed since 1949 as a charity dedicated to internationally significant research, policy support, campaigning, supporting community development and advocating progressive health and care services. Our aims are to maximise prevention, early intervention, citizen involvement and equity in mental health and wellbeing. Our Scotland teams are based in Glasgow and Edinburgh and we work directly with Government, NHS Boards, local authorities, partner with universities and many civil society organisations.

#### The problem

There is a major body of work that outlines the challenges faced by people with mental health conditions that reforms can help to address. This includes a major mortality gap, very high unemployment, stigma, discrimination and high service use (we can supply evidence). More broadly mental illness and distress underpin a large amount of primary care referrals. At a population level poor mental health is the underlying explanatory factor for the major health inequalities in Scotland, especially in areas and communities of multiple deprivation. This is through the direct effects of mental health but also related issues of suicide, violence, addiction and so on.

This submission offers (1) Broad evidence and (2) Examples of where we have evidence generated from Scottish programmes

**Broad evidence:** There is strong evidence for a prevention focus in mental health and illness which has significance for health and wider public services.

- The Mental health Foundation provide a compelling evidence base for preventative measures and early intervention in mental health in our recent *Prevention review landscape paper*.  
<http://mentalhealth.org.uk/content/assets/PDF/publications/prevention-review.pdf>

- A review of economic impact of mental health reforms in services and public health produced by Knapp et al at LSE '*Mental health Promotion and Mental Illness Prevention: The Economic Case*' (2011) highlights areas of investment including health visiting, certain parenting programmes, school interventions, early intervention psychosis, alcohol interventions, workplace interventions, debt advice, physical and mental health joint approaches, reducing loneliness in later life. Some have return on in financial investment within 1-2 years.

**Scotland Programmes:** The Mental Health Foundation lead, or co-lead, a series of national initiatives that have evidence to inform service reform. Please advise where you would like further details:

- Reducing stigma and discrimination – we lead the national campaign including research
- Peer support for carers and other groups who experience distress – we lead a national programme
- Preventative work with asylum seekers and refugees – community work and New Scots Strategy
- Improving mental health health of adults and children with long term conditions
- Mindfulness for common mental health conditions
- Arts referral and participation for prevention
- Self-management and peer support models
- Digital technology to transform mental health
- Workplace prevention and early intervention

Scotland's national strategies for mental health have been world leading but more can be achieved. Mental Health Foundation staff have authored academic papers and books in this field that are widely endorsed and have a range of international collaborative programmes on technology, reducing discrimination, citizenship learning from EU partners and US partners including Yale and NYU Universities.

We look forward to hearing from you

**Lee Knifton**

**Head of Mental Health Foundation for Scotland**

[www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk)