

Developing the workforce to deliver choice and to meet need

To support the implementation of the 5YFV an additional 3,000 high intensity therapists are to be trained by 2020/21. This commitment was a clear opportunity to deliver enhanced choice to clients and we would recommend that all future expansions of the NHS psychological therapies workforce seeks to address the imbalance between practitioners of different modalities, to ensure that choice becomes a reality for clients.

To assist with achieving this we would recommend that NHS England and Health Education England look to the existing highly trained, but underutilised, counselling workforce comprising our membership.

The small amount of upskilling or retraining required for BACP counsellors to work within IAPT could be done at a much lower cost and within a much quicker timeframe than training a new workforce.

2. What should any new mental health strategy post 2021 focus on?

We believe that the areas of focus beyond the 5YFV should be:

- Timely access to appropriate mental health support is vital and therefore we recommend an ambition for the NHS in England to ensure a full range of evidence-based psychological therapies is accessible to all people who need them within 28 days of requesting a referral, shorter for someone in a mental health crisis.
- A commitment that all IAPT recommended evidence-based psychological therapies are available through every service as well as ensuring clients have choice over which intervention they receive and are provided with clear information for on what their choices are and mean.
- An ambition to make psychological therapies available to 100% of people with common mental health conditions with a renewed campaign to educate the public on what psychological therapies are and to reduce stigma around accessing them.
- Plans for workforce development that would deliver the ambitions above and take account of the existing trained, but underused, workforce within the counselling professions.
- Focus on reducing stigma and increasing access to psychological therapies for older people with mental health problems.
- Focus on the development of long-term psychotherapy services for people with more complex and enduring mental health problems.

3. How can we better scrutinise the implementation of the Five Year Forward View for Mental Health and what role can the public,

Government, policy makers, Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs) and parliamentarians play?

We are now in the third year of the 5YFV, however progress reports and transparency around its implementation are essentially non-existent.