Older Peoples Mental Health Strategy for Oxfordshire
2010 – 2015

What do we mean by ‘mental health’?
Positive mental well-being has been defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as
“A state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community”.

It forms a central part of the WHO’s definition of health: “A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease”

Why do we need an Older People’s Mental Health Strategy?
The Equality Act 2010 states that age discrimination is prohibited. All services must be provided on the basis of need, not age. But while this is suitable for some services, there are some specific needs associated with older people’s mental health which means that it needs to be an area of focus. For example:

- Older people with mental health problems frequently have a different medical presentation compared with younger adults
- Certain conditions such as dementia are far more common among older people, and so these services need to be more targeted towards older people
- Older adults with mental health problems have not always benefited from some of the service developments for younger adults and this needs to be addressed
- Over a third of older people in the UK experience symptoms of mental health problems

The local situation

- Older people make up around 15% of the total population in Oxfordshire, and this is projected to grow to 20% by 2018
- The increase in the elderly population is expected to fall unevenly across the county
- Dementia and depression amongst older people are the one of the main contributors to stays in hospitals like the John Radcliffe and this is expected to increase

The Vision
Our vision is for Oxfordshire’s older people to be mentally healthy, feel empowered and remain as independent as possible for as long as possible whether in a state of good or poor mental health. This means

- Participating in life as active and equal citizens
- Realising their abilities, being able to cope with the normal stresses of life and making a contribution to their communities
- Challenging and reducing the stigma which mental ill health has carried
- Enabling access to high quality and timely services based on needs not age
Aim

The aim of this strategy is for NHS Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire County Council and the providers of the services to achieve the vision for older people’s mental health through the next five years of transition and change.

Objectives

Through the production of this Older Peoples Mental Health Strategy, we will seek to achieve the following objectives:

1. **Ensure fair access to services, regardless of age or condition**
   - The equal right to use a service or activity

2. **Increase awareness** of mental health problems and **reduce stigma** experienced by older people
   - Improve understanding of what mental health is
   - Reduce the disapproval that is often associated with having a mental health problem

3. **Implement programmes to improve mental well-being** and prevent mental ill health among Oxfordshire’s older people
   - Work to help prevent people having mental health problems
   - Work to help people stay well
   - Get problems recognised earlier - so those people that need help get it quicker

4. **Develop robust and appropriate support, information and advice** for carers and families
   - Good information and help for people caring for an older person with a mental health problem

5. **Ensure clear pathways of care** for older people with mental health needs
   - Know where you are in mental health services, the options available, what to expect and where you are likely to move to next

6. **Develop an appropriately skilled workforce** for older peoples mental health services
   - Train staff to improve skills and understanding of older people’s mental health needs

7. **Establish clear, fair and transparent financial arrangements**
   - Know how much funding and care you are entitled to and how this will be managed

How can you help?

We want your feedback on the draft strategy for older people’s mental health. What do you think of the seven objectives? Is there anything missing? What should the priorities be? Let us know your thoughts by getting involved. You can do this by visiting [http://bit.ly/oldermentalhealth](http://bit.ly/oldermentalhealth) or by requesting a copy of the strategy and survey by post or email. See ‘contact us’ below.

How will this be used?

The feedback and suggestions that you give us will be used to shape the content and final version of the strategy for older people’s mental health in Oxfordshire.

Contact Us

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You can also write to us with your views at:
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