

Re: Manifesto Submission on behalf of a coalition of 40 mental health organisations

I am writing on behalf of a coalition of 40 mental health organisations to call on the next Government to prioritise patient choice when accessing mental health services in its manifesto. The coalition has formed over two years ago when our campaign for NICE to adopt sound methodology in producing its guideline for depression in adults – which is the basis for the treatment recommendations for the millions of adults in the UK with depression – began. I attach our position statement, which lists the participating organisations.

Statement:

We believe that choice of psychological intervention is crucial to achieving better outcomes for the public when accessing mental health services; with research repeatedly showing that patient preference has a significant impact on treatment outcome.

The success of integrating shared decision making and patient choice into our national health service has been seriously hampered by an ambition to identify the most effective treatment for a specific disorder and the belief of a one-size fits all model for mental health. To support the idea that there exists a hierarchy of evidence-based treatments does not only ignore the suffering individual, but moreover operates in contradiction to the ethos of offering patient choice.

We believe that treatment guideline developers, service providers and commissioners need to recognise that a range of psychotherapeutic interventions have a robust evidence base and are as effective as each other as well as medical treatments. Patient feedback shows that different psychotherapy modalities have had different impacts at different periods in their life.

We are therefore calling on the next Government to deliver a full range of psychological therapies to all individuals accessing mental health services across the UK at all times that both provide a realistic opportunity for shared decision making and patient preference.