

A COLLECTIVE STRATEGY

We have carefully considered what we want to see in this strategy, in consultation with our service users, members and partners. This is a summary of our ten steps to a Strategy for Scotland's Mental Health. Visit www.samh.org.uk to read our detailed policy proposals for each step.

1. Target resources at needs, not budgets
2. Increase professional and public understanding of mental health
3. Spend to save: don't let short-termism take over
4. Fully implement and improve the Mental Health Act
5. Build mental health into every NHS department
6. Make services more responsive
7. Improve the criminal justice system
8. Commit funding to suicide prevention
9. Take action on alcohol
10. Stop the spiral of poor mental health

GET INVOLVED

To learn more about the ten steps to a strategy for Scotland's mental health and find out how to ask your local candidates for their support, please visit:

WWW.SAMH.ORG.UK

SAMH is the Scottish Association for Mental Health, a charity working across Scotland. Visit www.samh.org.uk or email policy@samh.org.uk for more information.

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**THE FOUNDATION STONE:
A STRATEGY FOR SCOTLAND'S
MENTAL HEALTH**



A STRATEGY FOR SCOTLAND'S MENTAL HEALTH

Since the Scottish Parliament was established, there has been good progress on mental health. Suicide rates have fallen, as have re-admission rates to psychiatric hospitals, and there is less stigma about mental health problems. We have new targets for accessing psychological therapies and children and young people's mental health services.

But we still have a long way to go. Too often, mental health is still seen as an NHS issue. In fact, mental health is about self-esteem and resilience: it's at the core of Scotland's well-being.

Experiencing a mental health problem should not be a passport to poorer prospects in health, employment and life chances, but too many people find that it is. We must do better, both because it is the right thing to do and because it makes economic sense.

THE FOUNDATION STONE

The social and economic costs of mental health problems in Scotland are £8.6 billion a year¹: that's more than the entire NHS annual budget. Poor mental health and well-being lies at the heart of some of the most expensive problems that Scotland faces: in not only health but also crime, unemployment and deprivation.

That means that we could not only improve people's lives but also save a lot of money by improving Scotland's mental health. But budgets are being cut across the country, and we risk losing the very services that can help to reduce future expenditure. A recession is no excuse for allowing mental health to stagnate: in fact, it offers opportunities for innovation.

Without good mental health, Government strategies on education, poverty, employment and many other areas just cannot succeed. Good mental health is truly the foundation stone of a better Scotland.

The progress which has been made to date has been hard-won. It will be lost without a new, overarching commitment by the next Scottish Government to build on the achievements so far.

In short, we need a new strategy for Scotland's mental health.

TEN STEPS TO A STRATEGY FOR SCOTLAND'S MENTAL HEALTH

SAMH wants the next Scottish Government to introduce a properly costed strategy for Scotland's mental health, with a credible plan for implementation. This strategy should not be located solely within the Health Department. Mental health is fundamental to wellbeing, to the ability to remain in employment, to criminal justice, social work, and many other areas.

What's more, the total cost of both health and social care amounts to less than a fifth of the social and economic costs of mental health problems. So a new strategy for Scotland's mental health must be enshrined throughout government.

1. What's it Worth? The Social & Economic Costs of Mental Health Problems in Scotland, SAMH, 2005