

Our declaration of commitment to better mental health research

We, the undersigned organisations, come together with a shared commitment: to transform the way mental health research is conducted, supported, and applied in the UK.

Mental health conditions account for 21% of the national disease burden, yet receive a fraction of the research funding allocated to other conditions. **For every person affected by mental illness, £9 is spent on research.** This is a huge disparity compared to other disease areas, such as cancer, where £228 is spent for every person affected.

People living with severe mental illness (SMI) die on average 20 years earlier than those without, often from preventable physical health conditions. Mental health treatments are limited, often ineffective, and can cause devastating side effects. Many individuals must endure a gruelling trial-and-error process to find something that works, if anything does at all.

We believe that everyone deserves access to effective, compassionate, and evidence-based mental health care. To achieve this, we must build a research ecosystem that is inclusive, innovative, and impactful.

Our shared vision for change

We have listened to the voices of people with lived experience, researchers, clinicians, and community organisations. Together, we have identified ten key areas where change is needed:

1. **Equitable access to research participation**

We commit to making research opportunities visible, inclusive, and accessible to all, especially to those from underrepresented communities.

2. **Increased and targeted investment**

We will advocate for and support funding that reflects the scale of mental health challenges and prioritises research that improves care.

3. **Building capacity across the system**

We will work to create space and support for research in diverse settings, empowering a wider range of professionals to participate.

4. **Challenging stigma in research**

We will promote positive narratives around mental health research and ensure that people with lived experience are seen as essential contributors.

5. **Supporting the research workforce**

We will nurture the next generation of mental health researchers through sustainable career pathways and inclusive opportunities.

6. **Fostering public trust in data use**

We will communicate transparently about how data is used and its role in driving better treatments and outcomes.

7. **Prioritising prevention and early intervention**

We will explore how research can support early access to care and address the broader social determinants of mental health.

8. Translating research into practice

We will strengthen collaboration between researchers, clinicians, and communities to ensure research leads to real-world improvements.

9. Innovating research methods and settings

We will embrace diverse methodologies and conduct research in settings that reflect the lived realities of mental health care.

10. Collaborating across sectors

We will break down siloes and build partnerships across disciplines, sectors, and communities to co-create meaningful research.

A collective responsibility

Mental health research is not the responsibility of any one group - it is a shared endeavour. Whether we are researchers, funders, clinicians, community organisations, or people with lived experience, we each have a role to play in shaping a research landscape that is responsive, inclusive, and transformative.

We commit to working together to:

- **Champion mental health research** as a vital part of health and social care.
- **Empower people with lived experience** to lead and shape research.
- **Build trust, transparency, and collaboration** across the sector.
- **Ensure that research leads to better care, better outcomes, and better lives.**

This is our shared vision. Together, we can build a future where mental health research creates the change desperately needed by people living with mental illness.

Signed,

McPin Foundation

*Mental Health Research for Innovation
Centre (M-RIC)*

Mental Health Research UK

Mental Health UK

MQ Mental Health Research

*NIHR Mental Health Translational Research
Collaboration (MH-TRC)*

Office for Life Sciences

Rethink Mental Illness

Schizophrenia Research Fund

University of Liverpool

