

Groundbreaking new platform launched to support mental health

Public Health England (PHE), in partnership with the NHS, today (Monday 7 October 2019) launches Every Mind Matters to help people take simple steps to look after their mental health, improve their mental wellbeing and support others.

It is increasingly recognised that taking care of our mental health is as important as maintaining good physical health. A new PHE survey reveals more than 8 in ten (83%) people have experienced early signs of poor mental health including feeling anxious, stressed, having low mood or trouble sleeping in the last 12 months. While these can be a natural response to life's challenges, they can become more serious if people don't take action, and many wait too long.

Over a quarter (27%) of people who experienced signs of poor mental health waited at least 6 months before taking action to manage their mental health, with three quarters (74%) of those who waited this long wishing they had done so sooner.

Every Mind Matters shows people the simple steps they can take to be better prepared for life's ups and downs. The new platform, which has been endorsed by the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP), will enable people to create a personalised action plan recommending a set of self-care actions to deal with stress, boost mood, improve sleep and feel in control.

A special film to promote Every Mind Matters has been written by Richard Curtis and directed by Rankin, narrated by Their Royal Highnesses The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and The Duke and Duchess of Sussex. It shows how we can all look after our mental health and will be aired at around 8:45pm on Monday night (7 October 2019) across ITV, Channel 4 and Sky channels.

The powerful film features a range of people whose lives have been affected by poor mental health, including a cast of well-known faces: Gillian Anderson, Glenn Close, Freddie Flintoff, Professor Green, Davina McCall, Jordan Stephens, Will Young, Sir Bradley Wiggins, Nadiya Hussain, Sarah Taylor, Rob Beckett, Katie Piper, Joe Sugg and Alastair Campbell.

The launch follows 18 months of planning and local and regional piloting, developed with clinical and academic experts, national mental health charities and input from people with experience of poor mental health. Clinically-assured by the NHS, Every Mind Matters is evidence-based and it shows people how to build simple changes into their daily lives – such as reframing unhelpful thoughts, breathing exercises and increasing physical activity.

All of these have well evidenced impact on improving and maintaining good mental health, which can help people to get more out of life, feel and

function better, have more positive relationships and manage difficult times – now and in the future.

Every Mind Matters is backed by a coalition of mental health charities and champions, including Mind, Mental Health Foundation, MHFA England, Samaritans, Heads Together, Centre for Mental Health, Rethink, Time to Change, NSUN, What Works Centre for Wellbeing and Good Thinking.

This new resource is available for the public and for GPs to advise their patients to use. The NHS will also promote Every Mind Matters to its one-million plus workforce.

Some of the nation's biggest companies from the high street, entertainment, sport and finance have pledged to adopt Every Mind Matters for their employees, customers and fans. These include Nationwide, Greggs and the England and Wales Cricket Board, who will be empowering their staff and the public to take their mental health into their own hands and encouraging them to create their own action plan.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock said:

Our health – both mental and physical – is an asset that needs to be nurtured. We're all aware of the benefits of looking after our physical health and the steps we can take to keep ourselves healthy, but many of us are not as knowledgeable or proactive as we could be when it comes to our mental health.

Every Mind Matters will benefit us all with an accessible tool to help manage our wellbeing at the click of a button. It will offer vital support to those living with a mental health condition and give each of us valuable and personalised tips on how to better cope with life's daily struggles, while contributing to tackling the stigma that can still surround mental health.

Duncan Selbie, chief executive of Public Health England, said:

Our health is affected by our circumstances, including having a job, friends and a roof over our heads. Anxiety, stress, low mood and trouble sleeping can affect everyone. Every Mind Matters aims to help people to better handle life's ups and downs.

Simon Stevens, NHS chief executive, said

Over the past few years there's been a profound sea change in public attitudes and awareness about mental health. So at the same time the NHS is expanding the availability of specialist mental health support and treatment, people are increasingly interested in practical steps they can take themselves to prevent and manage

common mental health problems such as anxiety, stress and depression. That's where Every Mind Matters comes in, as a helpful complement to the work of NHS mental health teams and services.

Paul Farmer, chief executive of Mind, said:

We all have mental health just as we all have physical health, and it can vary from good to poor. Most people know how important it is to look after their physical health and more and more people are understanding the need to look after their mental health as well, but lots of us don't know where to start.

That's why Mind has been helping develop Every Mind Matters, to empower people with the tools they need to deal with everyday causes of stress, anxiety, low mood and trouble sleeping. Taking proactive steps like increasing physical activity and connecting with others can help prevent these issues developing into more serious mental health problems further down the line.

At a time when only a third of people with a mental health problem get access to any kind of help and support, it's important to do whatever we can to help people take steps to stay well and try and prevent mental health problems developing in the first place.

We hope that this campaign will help increase public awareness of how we can all stay as mentally well as possible.

You can discover simple steps for a healthier mind and create your bespoke action plan at www.everymindmatters.co.uk.

PHE survey results

The PHE survey also found that nearly 6 in ten (57%) people who experienced concerns about their mental health turned to unhealthy behaviours – smoking, drinking alcohol, unhealthy eating or taking recreational drugs

Just over half (53%) of people who experienced concerns about their mental health avoided social situations or contact from friends and family.

Of those who took action, around a third (31%) only did so when it was having an impact on their daily life.

Background