

Poor mental health in the West Midlands region costs more than GBP3000 per person, study finds

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A new study has estimated the financial impact of poor mental health on the West Midlands region to be over £12 billion per year, including nearly £2 billion a year as a direct cost to the NHS – equivalent to more than £3000 for every person living in the area.

The study was commissioned by the West Midlands Mental Health Commission, a task force set up by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), to assess the current costs of [mental ill health](#) and current service provision across the region. It was led by the Health Services Management Centre at the University of Birmingham in partnership with the Centre for Mental Health.

As well as the significant [financial impact](#) of poor [mental health](#) identified in the study, other key findings include:

- Nearly one in four adults (23.8%) in the region are experiencing [mental health problems](#) at any given time.
- There are strong links between mental health and socio-economic conditions (for example, women living in the poorest households are nearly three times as likely as men living in the most well-off households to be diagnosed with a common mental health problem, and people living in the poorest socio-economic circumstances are ten times more at risk of suicide than those in well-off households).

- If the high costs of poor mental health are to be substantially reduced, the mental health of children and young people needs to be a priority, both for its immediate benefits and because intervention in the early years has been shown to reduce mental health problems in adulthood.
- Organisations in the WMCA have been pioneers in developing innovative models of care, However, there is variation between CCGs and Local Authorities in terms of the range of provision and performance on national performance indicators. This means that some people will find it harder to access the support they need.

These findings are now helping to inform the West Midlands Mental Health Commission's Action Plan and the full report can be accessed at: www.birmingham.ac.uk/hsmc/mh-wm-combined-authority.

This plan outlines a series of actions that will be taken forward by a range of organisations and partners in the region, who will work together to drive better mental health and wellbeing.

Chair of the WM Mental Health Commission, the Rt Hon Norman Lamb MP, says:

'This study highlights both the moral and the powerful economic case for ending the neglect of mental ill health. The enormous cost to the region of mental ill health must be tackled. The public, private and voluntary sectors must come together to commit to change. I want this region to lead the way in driving better mental health and wellbeing within our diverse communities and making more effective use of public resources to improve people's lives.'

Lead researcher Dr Karen Newbigging from the University of Birmingham adds:

'While our research has highlighted that individuals in the West Midlands have been pioneers in introducing better practice and support for people experiencing mental health problems, it also underlines the pressing need for different organisations to work together and in partnership with local people and communities, to not only design and deliver accessible and effective forms of support but to also tackle the root causes of [poor mental health](#), the associated stigma and discrimination, and to actively promote mental wellbeing for all.'

Provided by University of Birmingham

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