

# everybody's mental health matters

strategic plan 2005 - 2015



valuing the expertise  
and experience of  
people with mental  
health needs

# introduction

Since the production of Mental Health Matters last Strategic Document (Outlook for the next five years 1999-2004), we have continued on our successful journey of development whilst remaining true to our fundamental belief that everything we do must improve the lives of people with mental health needs.

Our flexible ways of working have enabled us to keep up with the levels of rapid change which are now a familiar theme running throughout UK healthcare provision. Much of this has been achieved by challenging traditional boundaries, building strong partnerships with many different organisations, and always taking into account what our stakeholders tell us.

In our last Strategic Plan, we gave ourselves a set of objectives on which to frame our future work. Thanks to the dedication of everyone who has worked with us over the last 5 years, we are proud to show you how well we have done.

## The story so far

### **We challenged ourselves to:**

- strengthen the voice of service users, carers, relatives and friends
- develop open, effective communication systems to enhance stakeholder involvement
- ensure the security and stability of the organisation via a secure financial foundation
- achieve and maintain recognised standards of quality
- Influence mental health policy and practice locally and nationally
- continue to develop and provide services both locally and nationally

### **and achieved this by:**

We developed a system of user representation through our National User Policy Advisory Council (NUPAC) which voices user opinion at all levels of the organisation. We are now in the initial stages of developing our membership strategy.

We have completed our Service User Empowerment Strategy which will be used to support our work to ensure effective empowerment and involvement mechanisms are in place for everyone with a mental health need. We have invested in technology designed to provide new ways of sharing knowledge and keeping our stakeholders up to date not only with our activities, but also with those of the wider mental health community. This technology will provide a whole new world of interactive features for anybody with an interest in mental health.

We have successfully achieved our required levels of financial reserve and all of our services operate within a defined quality framework.

We gained Investors in People (IIP) accreditation in 2001 and successfully maintained this following re-evaluation by IIP in Spring 2005. Our housing services continue to successfully rise to the challenge of meeting standards laid down by both Supporting People and the Commission for Social Care Inspection. Our helpline has gained accreditation with the National Telephone Helpline Association and internally, we have developed a robust quality standards framework which was piloted at the beginning of 2005.

We have gained involvement in local, regional and national health forums and are now partners in developing a number of multi agency mental health consortia dedicated to influencing national and regional policy formulation and service redesign.

We have exceeded our targets for net growth and also the development of our national presence. We now provide a range of integrated services throughout England and employ 240 staff and 30 volunteers.

What you are about to read is an outline of the journey we will be taking over the next ten years.

giving people  
genuine choices in  
the way they live  
their lives

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helping in excess  
of 1000 people  
every day across  
the nation

# our beliefs, values and commitments

In 1984 a small group of North East carers joined forces to form their own mental health charity which they hoped would provide quality mental health services for the relatives and friends they cared for. Twenty-one years later, their aspirations have been realised and Mental Health Matters has flourished into a substantial national organisation able to serve in excess of 1000 people every day.

At the heart of our work is the realisation that offering real choice is an essential part of ensuring the well being of the people using our services. We recognise that needs are varied and continually changing, everybody has mental health needs and each person has their own individual journey. Our belief in a person-centred approach has been proven to assist people on their road to recovery.

Throughout the lifetime of this strategic plan we will ensure the changes that we make, or are involved in making, are all carried out according to the following beliefs, values and commitments:

- **we recognise that mental health needs change and that people do recover**
- **working in partnership with service users and their families, friends and health professionals will help to maximise the quality of our services**
- **people experiencing exclusion as a result of their mental health needs have the right to somewhere to live, something to do and access to social opportunities**

- **our services will be well planned, innovative and reflect the real needs of the people using them**
- **equality of opportunity and respecting diversity is central to our success**
- **we will promote individuality, dignity and wellbeing**
- **we value working in partnership with other organisations and recognise the benefits of sharing best practice**
- **we will work to change negative attitudes commonly held about people with mental health needs through educating communities, mental health promotion and positive mental health practices**
- **we will strive to be an employer of choice**
- **we value the expertise and experience of people with mental health needs**
- **real service user empowerment is central to our commitments and beliefs with users being recognised as equal partners in the planning, development, delivery and monitoring of all our activities**

All of this is central to the way we work and we will ensure that we continue to develop high quality services which give people with mental health needs genuine choices in the way they live their lives.

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working towards  
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# the priorities for mental health

Policy and guidance materials have always had a direct influence on the support of people with mental health needs. The current agendas around Social Exclusion have led us to choose four specific areas which will strongly influence our work in the future:

## citizenship

Citizenship focuses on the minimum rights and standards of economic, cultural and social wellbeing. These rights are of particular importance to socially excluded groups in society. Therefore we will:

- **recognise people's rights and responsibilities**
- **offer choice and accessibility**
- **encourage people to voice their wants and needs**
- **listen to what they are telling us**
- **value the experience and knowledge of all individuals**

## health and wellbeing

As more services transfer to the voluntary sector, we will be better equipped to encourage people using mental health services to be in control of their own wellbeing by:

- **enabling people to have a greater say in choosing the services they use and the way they are run by adopting a flexible person-centred approach to ensure this**
- **offering choice along with evidence based information to allow people to decide what best suits their personal needs**
- **developing service models which encourage independence and focus on prevention and early intervention**
- **supporting models which encompass mental health promotion and positive approaches to mental health**
- **providing an holistic approach to wellbeing by supporting and respecting the emotional, physical and spiritual needs of the individual**

## community regeneration

High on our agenda is the recognition that a strong and healthy community is one that ensures the inclusion of everyone living within it. As such this will find us:

- **working with agencies outside the health care sector to help identify and manage the real causes of ill health**
- **continuing to provide quality housing based in real communities**
- **encouraging access to transport and leisure opportunities**
- **engaging in community partnerships which promote social inclusion**
- **developing community based alternatives to hospitalisation**

## employment and meaningful activities

Having a job and working towards employment are major factors associated with good health and wellbeing. Our future work will promote:

- **real employment and market value wages**
- **coping and retention strategies for service users and employers**
- **portfolios of learning experience and supported employment related to the open labour market**
- **self employment and social enterprise**
- **developing opportunities for people to widen their horizons and maximise their life skills, potential and experiences**

community based  
accommodation  
able to cater for  
every level of mental  
health need

# the future of our organisation

We have chosen a number of areas which we believe will have the greatest impact on the wellbeing of the people we serve:

- **recovery - mental health needs change and people do recover**
- **self-management - many people experiencing mental ill health can manage their own health needs**
- **therapeutic and early intervention - an essential element of recovery**
- **choice - people need to have a much greater say in the services they use**
- **mental health promotion - education will help eradicate mental illness of myth and stigma**
- **valuing diversity - everyone is different**

To achieve maximum benefits and enhance our existing service networks, our employment, housing and community support services will integrate all of these areas with their own priorities which are set out below.

## employment

Influences on our employment services include national planning, modernisation of traditional statutory services and most importantly, service user demand for access to real employment. Our future work will:

- **modernise employment provision with models that fulfil the need for real employment**
- **develop person-centred employment programmes**
- **promote job retention**
- **work more closely within education**
- **work closely with employers**
- **encourage employers to engage people with mental health needs as job opportunities arise**
- **provide a variety of routes into employment**
- **create social firms which offer real jobs**

We will achieve all of the above using a carefully planned approach for the development of nationally available employment services.

## housing

Over the years, we believe that our housing services have benefited from clear legislation, robust policies and sustained funding. More importantly for us, our highly skilled staff team have successfully developed a substantial array of community based accommodation able to cater for every level of mental health need. In addition to progressing a national housing strategy our future work will:

- **offer alternatives for people who would otherwise be admitted to hospital**
- **provide a choice of accommodation services for people who would otherwise be kept in hospital**
- **provide crisis and respite care**
- **develop home ownership programmes**
- **develop a capital programme for new housing provision**
- **ensure continued integration with our employment and community support services**

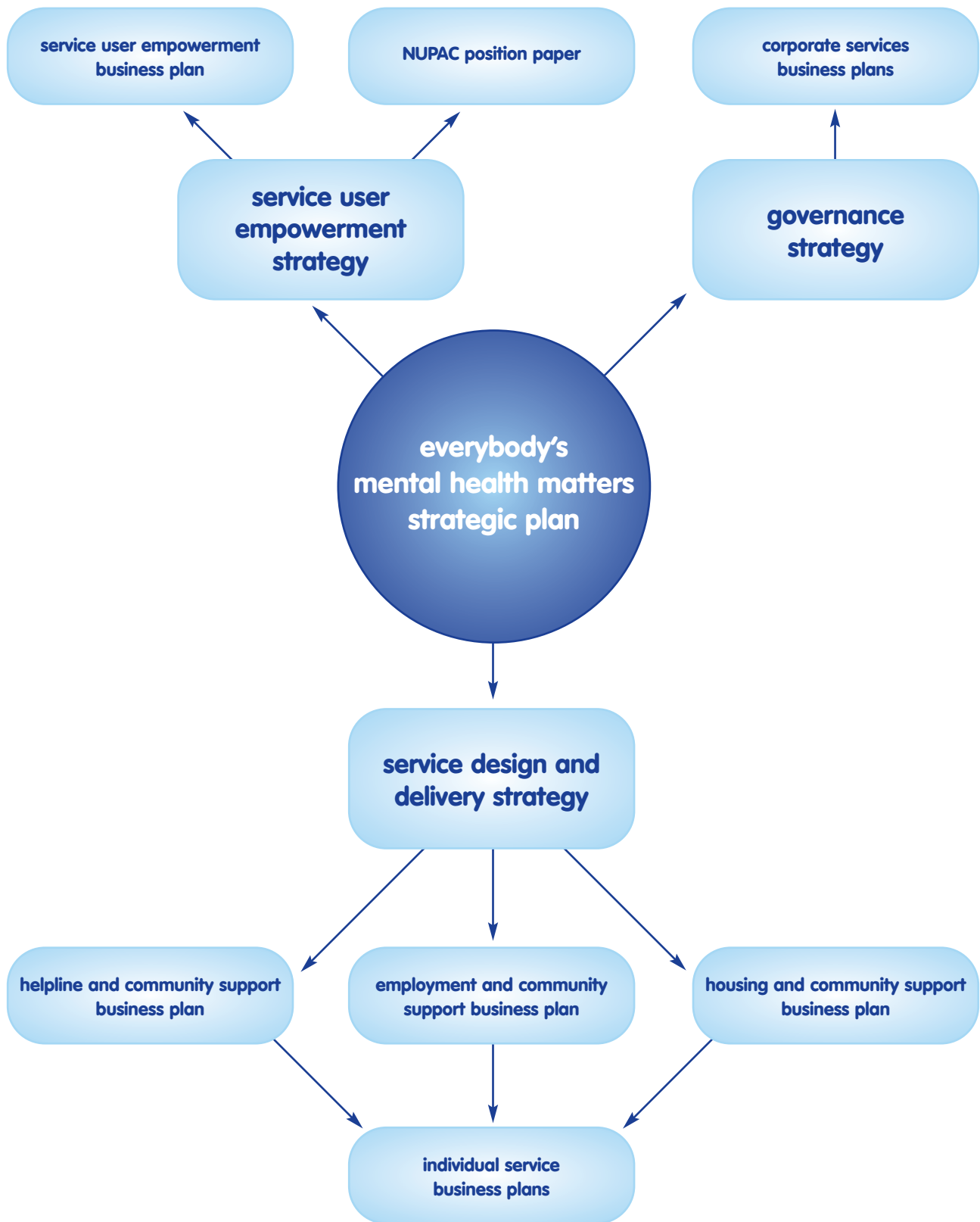
## community support

Our community support services continue to follow models of good practice and boast modern day services which provide a diverse range of social and educational activities including advocacy and advice services, a national helpline and a counselling service for carers. We will enhance this further by:

- **continuing to model our existing day services on recognised good practice**
- **expanding carer, advice and advocacy services**
- **developing self help solutions which will include online services**
- **increasing the geographical coverage and functions of our helpline**
- **increasing the variety of our service provision to fulfil the wide ranging requirements of people with mental health needs**

bringing about  
changes that really  
make a difference  
to people's lives

# mental health matters strategic plan, supporting documents and business plans



The **dark blue circle** denotes the document you are now reading, all strategies are available from our central office 0191 5163500 or from our website at [www.mentalhealthmatters.com](http://www.mentalhealthmatters.com)

# glossary of terms

## **Person-centred approach**

Services which offer an unconditional and non judgemental approach, which treat individuals with respect, accept individual needs, and empower and enable service users to take responsibilities, helping them to lead fulfilling lives in any way they choose. Providing services which meet a person's individual needs at any given time.

## **Recovery**

It is now recognised that a mental health need is often not life long and that people can and do get better. Integrating people back into the community using a range of support which successfully prevents relapses and helps participation in a variety of settings, including employment, education and training opportunities. This adds to a person's feeling of wellbeing and in turn may reduce their need to access other services.

## **Meaningful activities**

The things that people value and enjoy doing. This might include attending courses, clubs or societies and will usually involve the person improving their confidence and skills in the community.

## **Community**

A group of people who have something in common. This could be the place where someone lives or works, or people who share an interest or common aim. People have a sense of being part of a community whether this is an actual physical location or a feeling of belonging to a common group. People who do not feel part of a community can become isolated. Different communities make up society.

## **Wellbeing**

Wellbeing is about the whole person. It is not only about a person's physical health but also about a their mental, emotional and spiritual contentment. Things that can influence a person's wellbeing include where they live, their income, social networks/support and how valued and secure they feel within their community and wider society.

## **Citizenship**

Citizenship is about giving all members of society, regardless of their differences, the same rights, responsibilities and opportunities.

everybody's mental  
health matters



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