

## IIMHL & IIDL Leadership Briefing XXVI

### National issues regarding COVID-19 approaches in the UK

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These three reports focus on the UK's work on COVID-19.

They examine:

1. The need for critical data to assist in planning for COVID-19 work
2. The information found about mental distress in a national survey
3. Forecasting needs and risks in the UK with six recommendations made

We hope this is helpful to leaders in other IIMHL countries.

### **UK Parliament POST: COVID-19 outbreak: What data or information do experts want the UK Government to release?**

3rd June 2020

Over 1,100 experts have shared with us their concerns about COVID-19 and COVID-impacted areas in the immediate and longer term future.

This report includes data or information experts would like to see the Government release in order to understand the decisions that underpin its approach to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Generally, experts have highlighted five key areas of concern in the way the UK Government has released information.

These include:

- Transparency of decision-making mechanisms.
- The quality, quantity and range of types of evidence used.
- The justification of the Government's decisions.
- The need for accessible and understandable information.
- And the need to publish data as soon as its available.

Experts have also called for additional information to be released by the Government including:

- Academic studies, models and Government data sets used to make decisions.
- All data being collected during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Government guidance to departments, public bodies and public services.

- And recovery strategies from the Government and other public bodies

<https://post.parliament.uk/horizon-scanning/covid-19-outbreak-what-data-or-information-do-experts-want-the-uk-government-to-release/>

## **The Lancet: Mental health before and during the COVID-19 pandemic: a longitudinal probability sample survey of the UK population**

21<sup>st</sup> July 2020

Coupled with a substantial amount of worry about future insecurity, there are increasing concerns about the mental health sequelae of the pandemic in the UK. Policymakers, commissioners, and service providers need reliable information about mental health changes associated with the pandemic so that decisions are underpinned by knowledge of the scale of changes in population mental health, and who is most vulnerable to symptoms of mental distress.

We examine changes in adult mental health in the UK population before and during the lockdown. By late April, 2020, mental health in the UK had deteriorated compared with pre-COVID-19 trends. Policies emphasising the needs of women, young people, and those with preschool aged children are likely to play an important part in preventing future mental illness.

The substantial increase in mental distress in the UK population has not affected all groups equally. Established health inequalities persist, with prevalence of mental distress higher in people with pre-existing health conditions, those living in low-income homes, and people of Asian ethnicity. Other sources of inequalities have widened, with pronounced increases in younger (but not older) age groups, and in women (but not men). New inequalities in mental distress have emerged, with those living with young children and those in employment at the start of the pandemic being at risk of larger increases in mental distress.

These results reflect the UK situation after one month in lockdown. As furloughs turn into redundancies and mortgage holidays expire, the socioeconomic fallout on mental health inequalities might widen and increase and must be monitored closely, along with implementation of early mitigation strategies.

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366\(20\)30308-4/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366(20)30308-4/fulltext)

## **Centre for Mental Health: Covid-19 and the nation's mental health - Forecasting needs and risks in the UK**

2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020

Levels of psychological distress and mental ill health are rising internationally in the wake of Covid-19. Our second forecast of the mental health impacts of the pandemic, *Covid-19 and the nation's mental health*, warns that a combination of

challenging factors may affect the whole UK economy and have a major knock-on effect on mental health.

This follows our [first forecast](#), which indicated that about half a million more people will experience a mental health difficulty over the next year as a result of the pandemic. This second assessment reviews international evidence and explores the impact of Covid-19 on the mental health of children and young people, on the economy, and on those hit hardest by the pandemic.

Covid-19 is increasing levels of psychological distress around the world, and the mental health impacts are greatest among those most closely affected. This includes people living in areas where there are local outbreaks of the virus and people with long-term physical or mental health conditions.

The briefing warns that the combination of a possible rise in Covid-19 cases combined with seasonal flu, the absence of financial safety nets such as the furlough scheme, and a no-deal Brexit may affect the whole UK economy and have a major knock-on effect on mental health.

Recommendations include:

1. Target mental health resources where they are most needed
2. Proactively protect the mental health of children and young people
3. A psychologically informed return to school Schools need to be prepared to respond to the psychological impact of Covid-19 on pupils attending school now and returning in September.
4. Provide additional mental health support for groups facing further risks
5. Improve safety in the criminal justice system The Government should take action to reduce the number of people going to prison, investing instead in community sentencing options.
6. Support young people seeking employment. This should draw on the principles of Individual Placement and Support, which has been demonstrated to achieve higher success rates than traditional employment programmes among many groups of people, especially those living with mental health difficulties.

[https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-07/CentreforMentalHealth\\_COVID\\_MH\\_Forecasting2\\_Jul20\\_0.pdf](https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-07/CentreforMentalHealth_COVID_MH_Forecasting2_Jul20_0.pdf)