

The British Association of Social Workers (BASW) is the professional association for social work in the UK with offices in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. We are the independent voice of social work. We champion social work and help members achieve the highest professional standards. With over 20,000 members we exist to promote the best possible social work services for all people who may need them, whilst also securing the well-being of social workers working in all health, social care and youth justice settings. BASW works in partnership with a range of organisations in criminal justice; education and childcare; health and social care; local government; law enforcement and the private and voluntary sectors to promote the best interests of social work and social workers.

This consultation response was completed in conjunction with the Social Workers' Union (SWU) and a representative of their membership. SWU is the only UK trade union for, and run by, qualified and registered social workers. SWU works in partnership with BASW to protect social work professionals in their workplace. Having a professional association and trade union working together is important for the social work profession. Therefore, this response should be considered as the official views of both organisations.

BASW England and SWU welcome the Department for Health and Social Care's (DHSC) 'Advancing our health: prevention in the 2020's' consultation.

After consultation with our membership our response is as follows:

Which health and social care policies should be reviewed to improve the health of: people living in poorer communities or excluded groups?

- The policies in relation to equality, prevention and the accessibility of services could be reviewed. This could include a full evaluation of: funding streams, interpretation of relevant legislation and better training for professionals on supporting the wellbeing of people who use services - especially the homeless and other vulnerable groups.
- We believe better housing provision nationwide is needed. More access to practical help, like transport, form filling and decluttering. Easier access to primary health like blood tests and CAMHS Resources.
- The Care Act 2014 could be updated to incorporate more emphasis on the role of health practitioners, as it can be interpreted as mostly applying to social care practitioners.

Do you have any ideas for how the NHS Health Checks programme could be improved?

- The NHS Health Checks programme could be improved via national: roadshows; public awareness campaigns; advertising; surveys; increased service-user involvement; mobile outreach programmes and shared data between health and social care.

What ideas should the government consider to raise funds for helping people stop smoking?

- Smokers could be prohibited from smoking in entrances to public places and fines could be imposed where necessary. Children and people suffering from smoke inhalation issues could be involved in the campaign.

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- An additional 'health tax' could be placed on /tobacco. The funds could be 'ringfenced' and used only for prevention and helping people to stop smoking. Tobacco is a serious cause of health-related conditions and death and has a significant impact on the health and social care budget. Therefore, it is imperative the government proactively and aggressively seek to reduce smoking numbers.

How can we do more to support mothers to breastfeed?

- Better support would involve: Increased support to partners and significant others; a nationwide campaign against the stigma of breastfeeding (normalisation) and better 1-to-1 support for mothers.
- Midwives may benefit from mothers being involved in their continuous professional development – if this does not already happen.

How can we better support families with children aged 0 to 5 years to eat well?

- Re-establishing children centres (Sure Starts) will be vital in providing better support to families with young children.
- Supermarkets could be encouraged to reduce the price of healthy fresh food for people on Universal Credit.
- Health visitors could be encouraged to run group sessions in the community to promote healthy food/lifestyles and signpost services that provide financial support or food banks/services. This may also enable Health Visitors to work closer in partnership with other health and social care professionals.

How else can we help people reach and stay at a healthier weight?

- Regulating the 'fast food' industry to restrict the availability of unhealthy food and improve food quality.
- Allowing working people who are clinically obese 'time out' during the working day to exercise.
- Dietitians could be incorporated into GP practices and every practice could offer this service at least twice a year to every patient.

Have you got examples or ideas that would help people to do more strength and balance exercises?

- Time off work during the working day to undertake exercise.
- Investment in free/discounted gym membership from government, employers and/or the private sector.

Can you give any examples of any local schemes that help people to do more strength and balance exercises?

- A weekly organised community tug of war (at a local park) to promote community spirit.
- A weekly organised community litter-pick.
- Neighbourhood watch schemes.

There are many factors affecting people's mental health. How can we support the things that are good for mental health and prevent the things that are bad for mental health, in addition to the mental health actions in the green paper?

- A national campaign to combat the stigma.
- More mental health support in workplaces.

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- Reducing the waiting times and thresholds to access mental health support.
- Community based activities to promote social inclusion.

Have you got examples or ideas about using technology to prevent mental ill-health, and promote good mental health and wellbeing?

- Stay Alive is a useful suicide prevention 'app' that provides interactive support: <https://www.hpft.nhs.uk/information-and-resources/spot-the-signs/stay-alive-app/>.

We recognise that sleep deprivation (not getting enough sleep) is bad for your health in several ways. What would help people get 7 to 9 hours of sleep a night?

- Raise awareness about work-related stress.
- Campaign for a shorter working day/week.
- Promote that people should spend less time on devices.

Have you got examples or ideas for services or advice that could be delivered by community pharmacies to promote health?

- Free weight monitoring.
- Accessible dietitians' services.
- Workplace exercise plans.

What could the government do to help people live more healthily:

- Ensure homes and neighbourhoods have regular refuse and litter collection.
- In workplaces make lunch breaks statutory obligations.

What is your priority for making England the best country in the world to grow old in, alongside the work of Public Health England and national partner organisations?

- Support people who caring for older relatives.
- Improve community resources to meet the needs of older people.

Please expand on the reasons for your choice.

- Carers get very little support, as outlined in our recent response to the National Institute for Clinical Excellence: <https://www.basw.co.uk/media/news/2019/oct/basw-consultation-response-nice-adult-carer%E2%80%99s-guidance>. We need to focus on how to best meet the needs of our ageing population and supporting carers is a fundamental aspect of doing this.

What more can we do to help local authorities and NHS bodies work well together?

- Reduce bureaucracy by streamlining systems and processes.
- Improve multi-professional working by having one national database system (similar to the Police National Computer).

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- Social work is only mentioned once in the consultation document. More meaningful acknowledgement and involvement is needed to ensure provisions are holistic to meet health and social care needs.

We hope this feedback is helpful and received in the constructive spirit with which it is intended.

For further information please contact:

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