

LEGAL EAGLE



DAVID GRAY
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WITH PAUL HARBISON

Tough times for mental health

Mental health services are bracing themselves for what many expect to be damaging cuts and further lack of investment as the date of this year's budget announcement looms.

According to a report published by the World Health Organisation, as many as one-in-four people will suffer from mental health problems at some point in their life. It estimates that a total of 450 million people worldwide are suffering from mental or neurological illness.

There is mounting fear that governments across the world are failing those suffering mental illness.

Equality 4 Mental Health has begun a campaign aimed at getting Government ministers to sit up and take notice of the very real problems facing mental health services, and those suffering with mental illness in the UK.

The campaign is cross-party and cross-society, designed at persuading the Government that mental health problems are no less significant than physical health problems, and that only by increasing investment and understanding, can we hope to tackle what is a very real and growing problem.

Equality4 Mental Health has started a petition which aims to persuade



the Government to help assist those suffering with mental health problems by increasing funding and investment in this area rather than cutting it. The petition has already attracted a huge number of high profile signatories

from celebrities to politicians.

The campaign highlights the ten biggest problems within our current system. These include:

- The fact that those suffering with a mental health problem do not have the same access

to support and treatment as those with a physical health problem.

- The fact that 75% of children and young people with mental health problems go untreated.

- Cuts to services have led to people with mental health problems being moved away from their homes and families due to bed shortages. In some cases this has led to children being placed on adult wards.

- Research into mental illness only receives around 5% of the research budget despite the fact that it accounts for 23% of the disease burden.

If you would like to learn more or sign the petition you can visit www.equality4mentalhealth.uk/.

• Paul Harbison is a solicitor in the firm's specialist mental health team who advise and represent patients and their families before the Mental Health Tribunal and in the Court of Protection.

The team is headed by Mike Bishop, who is nationally recognised by Chambers Directory as a Star Individual in Mental Health, one of two in the country.

Contact David Gray Solicitors LLP via the website or call 0191 232 9547.

David Gray Solicitors is running a free seminar for businesses on Wednesday, February 24. For more information or to book a place contact Jayne.hart@HRdept.co.uk

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