

Professor Jonathan Benger CBE
National Institute for Health and Care Excellence
2nd Floor 2 Redman Place
London
E20 1JQ

DATE

Dear Professor Jonathan Benger CBE,

Re: NICE guideline on Generalised Anxiety Disorder and Panic Disorder in Adults

As parliamentarians, we are writing to express our concerns about the NICE Guideline on Generalised Anxiety Disorder and Panic Disorder in Adults and request its urgent review.

A coalition of over 30 highly respected organisations and individuals within the mental health sector has come together to raise a number of fundamental concerns regarding the current anxiety guideline. The primary issues of concern relate to the lack of patient choice of therapies, lack of consideration of access for marginalised populations and the treatment of evidence underpinning the guideline, as detailed in the stakeholder position statement.

Given the breadth and credibility of the stakeholders in this coalition – which includes many of the professional bodies regulating counselling and psychotherapy, Mind and the Centre for Mental Health – we believe that NICE should give careful and serious consideration to the concerns raised.

These concerns must be addressed given the wider context - with rates of anxiety rising across the UK, the NHS Talking Therapies receiving over 250,000 presenting complaints of generalised anxiety disorder in 2022-23 and 650,000 people claiming Personal Independence Payments (PIP) for anxiety and mood disorders in 2025. Against this backdrop it is especially important that questions about the guideline's fitness for purpose are addressed. The current guideline risks limiting the provision of effective treatment for anxiety and panic disorders, with potentially damaging impact on patients, services and the mental health workforce. This is particularly impactful given that NICE guidelines have a significant influence on policy and research both domestically and internationally.

We therefore urge you to respond to the concerns raised by the stakeholder coalition and address them through a full and proper revision of the guideline. Failure to do so risks undermining parity of esteem for mental health by restricting appropriate treatment options and patient choice, while further exacerbating pressures on existing services and a workforce already struggling to meet demand for support.

We therefore join colleagues across the mental health sector in calling for NICE to fully address these concerns and to ensure that people experiencing anxiety receive the timely, evidence-based, accessible support they need and deserve.

We look forward to your prompt reply.

Yours Sincerely,

SIGNATURES TO FOLLOW