"All our mainstream political parties have paid lip-service to 'parity of esteem' in mental health care. But what people need - what people deserve - is genuine parity of provision. That means investing in our mental health services and in the training of skilled professionals so that we can ensure that everyone who would benefit can access those evidence based psychological therapies for which there is so much demand. It’s time for the policies to follow the rhetoric."

- **Professor Peter Kinderman, President, British Psychological Society.**
  - [www.bps.org.uk](http://www.bps.org.uk)

"Over the last few months and years mental health has become the ‘issue of the moment’ with many politicians, with all parties making commitments to improving the lives of people affected by mental illness. But, ultimately, if you’re stuck on a lengthy waiting list for psychotherapy, this doesn’t look like it has translated into action.

“Our mental health service is still suffering the effects of decades of underfunding. It is overstretched and patchy in quality. There have been many missed opportunities in the past, and this General Election is another that can’t pass us by.

“We want all the parties to show people severely affected by mental illness that, as well as rhetoric, they have real plans for improvements to the services and support that so many people rely on.”

- **Brian Dow, Director of External Affairs, Rethink Mental Illness**
  - [www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org)

“Pressures on mental health services are at an all-time high. As more children and adults come forward with mental health conditions, services are increasingly struggling to cope. It is vital that we expand the provision of talking therapies and make sure they are better integrated in the NHS. This would cut waiting times and increase the chances of patients recovering”

- **Professor Sir Simon Wessely, President, Royal College of Psychiatrists.**
  - [www.rcpsych.ac.uk](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk)

“Better access to talking therapies is vital to give people of all ages the help they need for their mental health when they need it. Over the last ten years we have seen significant progress in extending psychological therapy provision on the NHS. But we have a long way to go and it is essential that the next government commits to improving mental health support for everyone who needs it.”

- **Sarah Hughes, Chief Executive, Centre for Mental Health**
  - [www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk)

“‘We know that around two thirds of people living with conditions like anxiety and depression are not receiving treatment. It is therefore critical that we make access to psychological therapies more readily available and in settings that promote access with least stigma - GP surgeries, schools, workplaces. We also need to ensure that people can access self-management resources online in their homes, to support their recovery and to prevent recurrence. All of this will require a significant scale up in existing investment in our psychological health, particularly for young people who hold the future of our society in their hands.”

- **Jenny Edwards, Chief Executive, Mental Health Foundation**
  - [www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk)

“We know that the work of our members changes the lives of individuals and communities. Counselling is crucial in helping people to recover from a mental health problem and helps build resilience. We believe it’s vital that all political parties commit to increasing the availability of high quality counselling and psychotherapy services, so that the public can access the therapy they want, when they need it.”

- **Dr Andrew Reeves, Chair, British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)**
  - [www.bacp.org.uk](http://www.bacp.org.uk)
“Mental health has risen up the political agenda for some years and we have all seen a number of major announcements by political parties on mental health and alleviating the suffering of those experiencing emotional distress. If the next government genuinely wants to deliver parity of esteem between mental health and physical health care then it should invest in the workforce so that both adults and children experiencing a wide variety of mental health problems can receive appropriate therapy. Far too few people receive the psychological therapy they need on the NHS and this situation must change.”

- Helen Morgan, Chair, British Psychoanalytic Council
- [www.bpc.org.uk](http://www.bpc.org.uk)

“Progress on achieving a meaningful choice of psychological therapies in IAPT and the wider NHS has been very slow. Nine years into the IAPT programme, for example, half of all providers still do not provide any Couple Therapy for Depression, even though it is a NICE-recommended treatment for depression. It is time that our politicians addressed the training and workforce issues which have so limited the expansion of choice of talking therapies in our mental health services”.

- Andrew Balfour, Chief Executive, Tavistock Relationships
- [www.tavistockrelationships.org](http://www.tavistockrelationships.org)

“Children and young people with mental health problems are still not getting the service and support they desperately need. Changes in training and commissioning around children’s mental health means that many CAMHS teams can only apply short term ‘sticking plaster’ treatments, even for those with the most complex mental health problems. We urge the government to invest to ensure that there is a properly trained and experienced workforce able to deliver a more comprehensive and readily available service.”

- Heather Stewart, Chair, Association of Child Psychotherapists
- [www.childpsychotherapy.org.uk](http://www.childpsychotherapy.org.uk) - Contact: commsdirector@childpsychotherapy.org.uk

“Given what we all now know about mental health – in particular how successful treatments can be – then how we respond to this issue defines us, more than ever before, as to the sort of society we aspire to be.”

- Piers Watson, Chair, OCD Action.
- [www.ocdaction.org.uk](http://www.ocdaction.org.uk)

“Even for people diagnosed with severe conditions like psychosis, there is now a solid body of evidence that psychological approaches to treatment may be essential to recovery.”

- Angela Drizi, Trustee, ISPS UK.
- [www.ispsuk.org](http://www.ispsuk.org)

“It’s clear that people need genuine choice from a range of evidence-based therapies. Yet currently, the most effective talking therapy, Couple Therapy For Depression, which achieves the highest recovery rate (58%), accounts for less than 1% of NHS talking therapy sessions funded through the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme. This must be greatly expanded in order to give people genuine choice and the best possible chances of recovery.”

- Chris Sherwood, CEO, Relate.
- [www.relate.org.uk](http://www.relate.org.uk)

“There has never been a greater need for access to talking therapy, especially among young people. What is currently available on the NHS, while valuable for some, falls far short of what our society needs. No two people are the same and a flexible treatment pathway will achieve the best rehabilitate outcomes. People need a choice of quality treatments, including counselling, delivered by practitioners on an Accredited Register.”

- Vicky Parkinson, CEO, National Counselling Society.
- [www.nationalcounsellingsociety.org](http://www.nationalcounsellingsociety.org)
“Early intervention for mental illnesses, including eating disorders, is vital. We wouldn’t delay if someone had broken their leg and we mustn’t delay in providing high quality therapy to those who need it. We need stringent waiting time targets for mental illness, including adults with eating disorders, and where targets are already in place, such as for children and young people with eating disorders, there must be sufficient funding in place to ensure those targets are met”

- Andrew Radford, Chief Executive, Beat
- www.b-eat.co.uk

“Most people with mental health problems are still unable to access psychological therapy on the NHS. People need better, and we as therapists want better – but we need the resources to see more people, see them quickly, and offer them enough therapy sessions to genuinely help them.”

- Janet Weisz, Chief Executive, UK Council for Psychotherapy
- www.ukcp.org.uk