changing political climate
A new era for mental health

What’s Inside...

Books come to life
Borrow a person for a thirty minute chat

‘see me’
New images to support the campaign

Breakthrough Art
**Introduction**

With the countdown to the general election now on, this edition takes a look how we can make sure we elect a group of MPs who will lead the way in challenging discriminatory attitudes and behaviours to mental health. Nine out of ten people with mental health problems experience stigma and discrimination. We need the next government to tackle this.

We all know that in the run up to the general election there is much mud slinging at prospective candidates and political leaders of all parties. This is a daily reality in the cut and thrust of British politics.

However what is unhelpful is the use of any politician’s mental state as a weapon to undermine their ability to lead a country, represent their constituents’ needs, or make a contribution to the way our country is governed. Winston Churchill is considered the most popular British leader of all time yet he experienced depressive episodes throughout his life, including his time in office. His drive, energy and determination was not compromised or lessened.

Recent media commentary has, yet again, sparked an unhealthy and unhelpful debate about the mental wellbeing of the current Prime Minister and hints that he may be unfit to carry out his duties. Whatever your political views, bringing mental health into this debate is adding to negative stereotypes and undermines our efforts and that of many others to help overcome the view that people with mental health problems shouldn’t be in powerful or responsible positions.

However what is unhelpful is the use of any politician’s mental state as a weapon to undermine their ability to lead a country, represent their constituents’ needs, or make a contribution to the way our country is governed. Winston Churchill is considered the most popular British leader of all time yet he experienced depressive episodes throughout his life, including his time in office. His drive, energy and determination was not compromised or lessened.

Herefordshire Mind – Zest

During a successful Get Moving week last October, Herefordshire Mind’s Zest project walked a mile through Hereford city centre to plant spring bulbs, on a strip of land kindly donated by Herefordshire Council.

Zest has been keeping a watchful eye on the progress of the bulbs, planted using lovely Time to Change colours, red tulips and white daffodils. When the flowers finally emerge, they plan to organise a walk back through the city to revisit the blooming flowers and have another celebration! Zest plans to invite the partners who supported them last time, namely Amey (the Council’s contractors (right)), who dug lots of holes, the Council’s Parks and Countryside Department staff, the Pedicabs staff, who transported less able people to the event and Carey Organics who supplied wonderful fresh Herefordshire apple juice.

Zest sees the conversion of the unwanted strip of land into a beautiful oasis as a lasting and colourful legacy of what Zest and Time to Change has achieved.
The next burst of campaign activity will launch on 19 April, with a media partnership with The Mirror. This will mean that Time to Change has a big presence in the Mirror for 4 weeks, including both advertising and editorial, so that readers have the opportunity to really engage with and understand the campaign.

Our ‘Schizo – the movie’ trailer will hit the silver screen from Friday 23 April and will run for 3 weeks. The trailer, which formed part of our Summer 09 online campaign activity, will be shown in selected cinemas and really getting people to think about and realise their own prejudices. This emotional reaction that the film elicits fits perfectly with our 2010 campaign aim, which is to encourage people to realise that it’s their own attitudes and behaviour that lead to stigma and discrimination.

During the campaign period, we will be using new celeb faces in online ads on popular sites including MSN, Yahoo, the Sun, the Mail, etc. We are also planning to have some advertising on the London underground, which is due to go live on 10 May and will run for two weeks, featuring our new celebrity faces. As the call to action across all communications is ‘Pledge to help end mental health prejudice at time-to-change.org.uk’, we are currently in the process of updating the visual pledge in order for it to be hosted on the Time to Change website rather than on Facebook and it will also include brand new features and ways for people to pledge their support for the campaign in time for the April activity. We are also producing new pledge postcards so that people can pledge offline too. We already have over 3000 faces on the existing pledge and we’re sure we’ll get lots more!

New resources to help you run your own local activity

With all this public-facing activity taking place nationally, late April to early May is the ideal time to run your own local activity. So, in time for the April launch, we will be updating our toolkit so that it will include even more ideas, case studies and resources to help local organisations to run their own anti-stigma campaigning activity and Get Moving events. The new and improved toolkit web pages are now available at www.time-to-change.org.uk

And that’s not all, to help you put your ideas into practice, we have launched a brand new ‘Campaign in a box’ that includes items such as t-shirts, stickers, balloons, banners and leaflets - everything your organisation or group needs to run your own local campaign. Boxes are now available for organisations to order from the Time to Change website.

If you would like to find out more about running your own local campaign please contact us at campaign@time-to-change.org.uk

BME pilot campaign update

Following evaluation of our 2009 campaign activity, we recognise that more work needs to be done to understand BME audiences, and so we are now working on a small pilot campaign targeted at a specific local and BME organisation. The campaign will be delivered later in 2010 and Time to Change will work in partnership with key local and BME organisations to deliver this pilot. We will be evaluating the pilot as we hope to learn a lot more about working with BME audiences which we can carry through into future phases of Time to Change.

For someone with a mental health problem how you deal with it makes a difference

Recent independent research has shown us that we need to be even sharper at reaching those members of the public previously untouched by the campaign. Our recent strategy has been to use broadcast media (television and radio) but focus how we buy it (primarily focusing on daytime TV) to deliver optimum efficiency against our core target audiences – while maintaining the awareness of all adults that we have already built.

Our audience has also been targeted using a poster campaign combined with bus panels along job centre routes. Parts of our target audience are avid readers and as such we are using inserts in targeted titles (People’s Friend and Radio Times) to provide sufficient copy to explain the issues.

Creative testing was carried out with the target audience and groups of people with lived experience of a mental health condition as part of the campaign development.

We know that many people do not know how to act towards someone with a mental illness. We are working to convey that having a mental health problem does not mean that the person you know before has transformed into someone else. They’re still the same person.

All the new creatives feature black and white photography with a strapline: “see me, hear me, support me...” and the slogan “your friend/your partner” depending on the creative. The photographs show people interacting in everyday situations, to combat misconceptions that a mental health problem inevitably impacts on your everyday behaviour. The line which runs through the campaign is ‘For someone with a mental health problem, how you deal with it makes a difference’. This is to make the potential supporter realise how important their role is to their friend or family member who has a mental health problem.

Advertising ran throughout January and was supported by PR activities.

Other recent events have included the wrapping up of our 2009 photo competition (A Positive Frame of Mind) and the launch of our new Small Grants Scheme – which aims to encourage people with lived experience to lead projects which tackle stigma and discrimination, promote recovery and encourage more contact between people with mental illness and those who don’t (yet)...
Over the next few months a General Election will be called and many expect this to lead to a very different political landscape. This, coupled with the recession, makes it an incredibly important time to be communicating Time to Change’s messages to ensure that the needs of people affected by mental health problems are not forgotten.

Rethink and Mind regularly meet with the main political parties and have developed fantastic ‘mental health champions’ based within Parliament - MPs and Peers who help us gather widespread support for our campaigns. Unfortunately, many of these champions are planning to stand down at the next election. As such, it is essential that we do all we can to ensure mental health is high on the agenda throughout the election, both with the national parties and locally.

Time to Change and its partners will continue to press politicians, Party policy leads and influential think tanks to try and ensure they understand how important it is that they tackle mental health stigma and discrimination. While this has all been very positive, it’s essential that local Parliamentary candidates hear first hand from would-be constituents about why this is something all MPs must understand and be committed to championing if elected.

Hundreds of new MPs will be forming the new Parliament, so this is a once in a generation opportunity to positively influence the future intake of politicians before they take their place in Westminster. Time to Change supporters can play a powerful role through meeting their local candidates, briefing them on these issues and securing their commitments pre-election. This really will help to ensure that the MP representing you in a year’s time understands how mental health is high on the agenda throughout the election, both in Westminster itself and in wider society.

It started in January 2009 with Gordon Brown, David Cameron and Nick Clegg all pledging their support for Time to Change. 112 MPs signed an Early Day Motion (a form of parliamentary petition) to say were backing Time to Change, and 75 signed in support of Mind’s Men and Mental Health campaign later in the year.

A number of the Bills making their way through Parliament provided further opportunities to highlight discriminatory laws and practices, such as the Equality Bill. Mind, Rethink and other charities urged politicians to ban pre-employment health questionnaires in the Bill. These questionnaires allow employers to weed out job applicants with mental (or other health) problems that they don’t like the look of, before they’ve even had a chance to interview. But thanks to a well-coordinated lobbying effort, politicians on all sides accepted our arguments and the relevant clauses have now been added to the Equality Bill.

Within a couple of days this received over 2,000 signatures from members of the public. Please pledge your support today via www.rethink.org/election and together we can march to Downing Street to call on the next Government to act!

We are also supporting activists to hold local events with their candidates and gain public commitments on what they do on mental health if elected, and help put mental illness on the political map locally. If you would like a pack which outlines the different ways to engage local candidates, please do get in touch.

You can act immediately by contacting your local candidates to ask them to pledge to champion mental health if elected via www.rethink.org/election2010. Not only will this help us to ensure that our supports needs are addressed in Parliament, it will mean that we’ll have local champions who’ll be committed to protecting services from cuts - support that may prove invaluable over the months and years ahead.

Please get in touch with via victoria.walsh@rethink.org or 020 7840 3149 if you’d like to help us ensure the next government cares - and acts - on mental health!

Let’s face it - mental health is not a ‘sexy’ subject. Politicians are not falling over themselves to make speeches about it. It occasionally makes the news, but the stories are usually tucked away on page 23, far behind the more pressing celebrity issue of the day. As a mental health campaigner, it sometimes feels like mental health is at the very bottom of the political priority list.

But though it’s not always reported, many politicians do speak up for mental health, and our messages are getting through. Over the last year in particular, politicians have shown a strong commitment to tackling mental health stigma and discrimination, both in Westminster itself and in wider society.

It started in January 2009 with Gordon Brown, David Cameron and Nick Clegg all pledging their support for Time to Change. 112 MPs signed an Early Day Motion (a form of parliamentary petition) to say were backing Time to Change, and 75 signed in support of Mind’s Men and Mental Health campaign later in the year.

A number of the Bills making their way through Parliament provided further opportunities to highlight discriminatory laws and practices, such as the Equality Bill. Mind, Rethink and other charities urged politicians to ban pre-employment health questionnaires in the Bill. These questionnaires allow employers to weed out job applicants with mental (or other health) problems that they don’t like the look of, before they’ve even had a chance to interview. But thanks to a well-coordinated lobbying effort, politicians on all sides accepted our arguments and the relevant clauses have now been added to the Equality Bill.

We then saw cross-party efforts to repeal Section 141 of the Mental Health Act - a discriminatory piece of legislation that forces MPs to resign if they are detained under the Act for six months or more. We argued that Section 141 sends out the false message that people who have experienced mental health problems are not fit to work, even after they have recovered. It is particularly insulting because there is no similar law relating to debilitating physical illness, and nor would it be tolerated if there were.

In January 2010 the Speakers Conference (a Parliamentary committee looking at issues around representation) agreed that Section 141 "embodies attitudes which stigmatise and sap the confidence of people with mental illness" and that it should be repealed as soon as possible.

So it’s fair to say that progress has been made – but none of it would have happened without dedicated campaigning from people with personal experience of mental health, the friends and family of those directly affected, mental health professionals, and charities like Mind and Rethink. We cannot be complacent though; there will be hundreds of brand new MPs in Parliament after the general election, and we need to make sure mental health is high on their priority lists too. It is absolutely crucial that you speak to your local candidate during the run up to the general election, and tell them why mental health matters. MPs are there to represent their constituents, so please do everything you can to make sure they represent YOU!
As well as challenging discrimination, Time to Change takes a wellbeing approach that embraces the link between mental and physical health for everyone. Over the last two years our 28 local community projects have promoted physical and mental wellbeing, to people with and without experience of mental health.

Our projects have taken a very community-focused approach that has resulted in 28 very different projects and sadly three projects funding has come to an end.

Solent Mind finished their Community Wellbeing project feeling extremely proud of what they were able to achieve in the short life of their projects. Many of the 800 recipients of their physical activity services reported improved levels of fitness, weight loss, increased confidence, increased levels of social contact and friendship, as well as volunteering and employment.

Solent Mind provided both one-to-one and group activities. Individuals were encouraged to access local facilities including swimming groups, gyms, Tai Chi, cycling and boxercise. Groups for jogging and walking were particularly popular as they brought together people with and without experience of mental health problems.

They also delivered seated running exercise sessions in residential homes and were involved in co-writing a Good Food for Good Mood leaflet with a Solent Mind BME development worker which is to be translated into several community languages.

Sheelagh Kreft, Solent Mind Project Manager said: “The past two years, have been very busy and last years successful Get Moving week was a consolidation and celebration of all the work we have done previously. On World Mental Health day we organised a Wellbeing Funday in a city centre park. We had over 200 people including a local MP Alan Whitehead come together and take part in a variety of activities, one of which was a coconut shy “smashing through stigma”.

Solent Mind will be continuing its popular walks and will be recuiting more volunteers to make it self-supporting by the end of 2010. Solent Mind will also be continuing its anti-stigma work through its other projects throughout 2010.

Over the last two years Mind in Mid Herts’ Exercise to Health project has successfully promoted Time to Change’s message of wellbeing through physical fitness to large number of groups, organisations and individuals. As well as banning the drum of wellbeing, they have supported people with experience of mental health problems to access activities such as gyms and dance classes.

In addition to gathering information on the benefits of physical exercise on wellbeing, Exercise to Health has also collected information on the direct physical effects exercise has on blood pressure and BMI. (This information may be used as a part of the Institute of Psychiatry evaluations)

In celebration of what Exercise to Health has achieved during their two years they have produced a short film. To watch the film visit www.mindinmidherts.org.uk/exercise

Open Up supports conference to get talking about mental health right

On Monday 1 February, 2010, the team behind lifestyle magazine for people with mental health problems One in Four brought together 100 people from across the country together in London for their conference ‘Talking About Mental Health – Getting It Right’.

The conference was supported by Open Up, Time to Change’s grassroots anti-discrimination project. The conference attracted a wide range of high profile speakers from Time to Change supporter and former Downing Street Director of Communications Alastair Campbell to award winning blogger Seanne Molloy.

The room was packed with a mixture of people from many organisations, including community groups, the NHS, local councils, charities and not for profits organisations. Many people were present both in an organisational capacity and as a person who has experienced mental health problems.

Debra Alcock Tyler, Chief Executive of The Directory of Social Change, spoke about her own experiences of mental health problems, as well as how it has not stopped her from holding a senior post and how she has worked to improve mental health provision in her workplace.

Heather Payne, from Warwickshire User Forum spoke about the experiences that her group of activists have had working with the media and with communications professionals. She gave an example of how one of her group worked with a journalist on an article for the local newspaper. The article itself was about making sure that we don’t forget that people with mental health problems can be professionals too, and how messages about mental health are far more powerful when delivered by people who have direct experience. Dan Holloway, author and consultant, spoke about his own experiences of mental health difficulty and the challenges we face in getting mental health onto the political and public agenda. For Campbell, there isn’t one large event changing the mind of a country, but a series of small ones that gradually pick up speed and weight until it becomes impossible to ignore. Campbell stressed that it is up to all of us to think of ways of best putting the case for mental health change across, and finding ways of working with the media to do that.

The conference was brought to a close by Sue Caro, senior diversity manager for the BBC, with an explanation of how the BBC had approached mental health and how positive images of people with mental health problems in popular media changes minds and attitudes.

Walking around between sessions there was a sense of excitement, captured in the interviews that make up the ‘Talking About Mental Health – Getting it Right’ podcast, prepared by media organisation Sound Delivery as the conference was taking place.

You can download the podcast here: http://bit.ly/cjwmm

You can find out more about One in Four by visiting their website www.oneinfourmag.org.uk

The Spring edition of One in Four magazine, out in March. It will also be available in a stand alone format and online.

www.time-to-change.org.uk
CoolTan Arts

CoolTan Arts, an inspiring user-led mental health charity, hosted an exciting film premiere on Monday 8th February. The charity launched its new film, Largactyl Shuffle, a film based on its regular sponsored walks.

The film captures moments from a walk called the Largactyl Shuffle; the footage captures a walk that took place on last year’s World Mental Health Day, 10th October 2009. The Largactyl Shuffle is fast gaining a reputation as one of the best walks in London and takes its name from the shuffling walk often associated with Largactyl, a psychiatric drug.

The Largactyl Shuffle is a cultural arts walk through the Borough of Southwark, from Maudsley Hospital in Denmark Hill to the Tate Modern. The CoolTan volunteers use art, humour, architecture and local history to promote physical and mental well-being. Walks take place every third Saturday of the month, each with a different topic.

People interested in taking part in The Largactyl Shuffle are welcome to join other walkers. The group meets at 12noon at the main entrance of Maudsley Hospital, Denmark Hill, SE5 8AX.

CoolTan Arts is based in Southwark, London and believes mental well-being is enhanced by the power of creativity. The charity runs a varied programme of creative workshops from an arts centre in Southwark, London. The diverse range of activities includes visual arts, batik, digital arts, video, poetry, and performing arts. The charity also organises exhibitions and public art projects in the hope of breaking down the stigma of mental illness.

CoolTan works with the local community to offer the opportunity for businesses to get involved and exhibit their own work, by offering its gallery space. The charity also runs a volunteering programme offering people meaningful engagement and the opportunity to learn useful skills.

The mental health charity released two other short films, Maggi Hambling is a film about the charity's patron in which she discusses her work as an artist and her mental health. ‘CoolTan Arts – Who We Are, What We Do And How We Do It’ gives a short oversight into the charity's work. To view the films or for more information go to www.cooltanarts.org.uk

Out of context

Earlier this year photographer Lorraine Goddard (former wife of 80s singer Adam Ant) organised an exhibition at the Getty Images Gallery.

The exhibition entitled ‘Out of Context’ features more than 50 people in the public eye doing what makes them happy. The show, which included images of Catherine Tate, Sadie Frost and Ruby Wax (left), took several years to put together. The exhibition aimed to raise awareness of mental health.

Lorraine explained: “I have photographed over 40 people over the last few years for my project. Depression is one of the last taboos since AIDS. Everybody knows somebody that has experienced it directly or indirectly and my aim is to help lift the stigma attached to it.”

The photos from the exhibition will be collated into a coffee-table book out later in the year.

Breakthrough Art

Tony Russell and his wife Angie Russell are the team behind Breakthrough Art, a community interest company that promotes positive mental health through the creative arts. Through Breakthrough Art’s magazine Reflections and its website they showcase and sell artistic work done by people who have had experience of mental distress.

As a service user himself, Tony understands the value of creative arts, as both a form of therapy as well as coping strategy. When Tony was admitted for the first time in to a psychiatric unit, it came as a bit of a shock that there were no instant cures for his mental health problems and it was at this point that he realised that he need to find his own coping strategies. Although Tony has used various other coping strategies they have not had the lasting effect art has had.

“I do not have the talent to paint or perform, but I like to think that I can take a fairly good photograph. I brushed the dust off my camera and started photographing sunsets. The effects were almost instant and certainly very relaxing, and the feeling of self-worth from people wanting to buy my pictures was invaluable.”

Over recent years Tony has seen a greater appreciation of the value of art as a therapy, and its importance in enhancing the healing environment. But what he views as worrying is that in these tough economic times art in mental health may be seen as an easy target for service cutbacks.

“There is a strong evidence base and a fast-growing library of anecdotal evidence, that clearly demonstrates the vital role that the creative arts have in not only aiding recovery, enhancing the healing environment and improving people’s sense of wellbeing, but perhaps more importantly for number crunchers, it is undoubtedly a cost-effective way of reducing contact with more expensive services.”

“We are determined to ensure that during these days of financial cutbacks, arts in health and arts in mental health are not seen as an easy target.”

For more information about Breakthrough visit www.breakthroughMHart.com

To sign Breakthrough Art petition to safe guide the use of the arts as an aid to recovery visit http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/Artworks

www.time-to-change.org.uk

www.cooltanarts.org.uk

www.lorrainegoddard.co.uk

For more information go to www.cooltanarts.org.uk

www.time-to-change.org.uk
Get Involved

Join the movement to end mental health discrimination today!

Sign up – if you haven’t already, sign up to receive our newsletter and other updates and involvement opportunities from Time to Change

Online at: www.time-to-change.org.uk

By emailing: info@time-to-change.org.uk

By calling: 020 8215 2356

By writing to: Time to Change, 15-19 Broadway, Stratford, London E15 4BQ

Pass it on – please pass this newsletter on to anyone who might be interested.

If you’d like a PDF of the newsletter, or want to use articles or images from this issue to post on your organisation’s website, please contact Tracey Whittingham, Communications Officer on t.whittingham@time-to-change.org.uk

Who is your mental health hero?

The Mind Champion award was launched by Mind in 2004 to honour the person or people who make the most important contribution to challenging discrimination against people with mental health problems. Past winners have included Frank Bruno, The Archers, plus two of Time to Change’s celebrity supporters Stephen Fry and Alastair Campbell.

To nominate your champion simply visit www.mind.org.uk/mindchampion and complete the nomination form. The deadline for nominations is 14 May 2010. The shortlist of six people who have made an outstanding contribution to mental health over the last year will be posted on Mind’s website. People will be invited to vote online for their 2010 Mind Champion. The winner will be announced at the Mind awards ceremony on 8 July.

Mind is a partner in Time to Change.

Islington Pledge

In January Islington Council joined the growing number of organisations pledging their support to end discrimination against people with experience of mental health problems.

At a signing ceremony at Islington Town Hall, Sue Baker, Director of Time to Change was joined by representatives from Islington health and housing agencies, as well as Arsenal FC, to pledge their support to the Time to Change campaign and their commitment to promoting a better understanding of mental health problems and give positive support and welfare advice to their staff.

Islington Council’s Cllr Woolley said: “The council and its health partners have already made progress in promoting positive attitudes to mental health. “Now we are seeking a change among the wider population to destigmatise mental health problems and make people aware of the support and advice that’s out there. Islington Council and NHS Islington have recently invested more money into mental health, making 1,000 hours psychological support available as well as developing new high quality housing facilities for people living with a variety of mental health conditions.

NHS Islington Chair, Paula Kahn said: “We are proud to be involved in this campaign as helping people to have good mental health is a top priority for NHS Islington and in signing this pledge we are further reinforcing this commitment to end discrimination”.

Time to Change Pledge Signers:

- NHS Islington
- Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust
- City University
- Homes for Islington
- Islington Council
- Arsenal FC
- Voluntary Action Islington
- Hyde Housing

Our latest supporters

Alastair Campbell, Mind Champion 2009