



Evidence briefings on Londoners' mental health and wellbeing:
Context & Scope



Contents

Context	3
Scope, methodology and limitations	4



Context

[Thrive LDN](#) is a citywide movement to ensure all Londoners have an equal opportunity to good mental health and wellbeing. We are supported by the Mayor of London and London Health Board partners.

Since March 2020, we have been coordinating the public mental health response to the coronavirus pandemic on behalf of London's Health and Care Leaders and wider partners, with the aim of ensuring London's diverse communities have the strength and resilience to cope with and overcome unprecedented events.

Through this, Thrive LDN has established a public mental health research and community insights function, to provide up-to-date evidence on mental health and wellbeing in the capital. This involves extensive community engagement and participatory action research with communities that are disproportionately at risk of poor outcomes in order to improve the representativeness and granularity of available information. To date, Thrive LDN has engaged with over 200 community groups and organisations and listened to over 10,000 Londoners with a view to understanding more about the experiences of 20 disproportionately at-risk communities. Whilst this work is ongoing, we have published [Pandemic Stories](#), a participatory action report in partnership with [Toynbee Hall](#), and [Thrive Together](#), a thematic analysis of insights, stories and narratives of Londoners in 2020.

As part of the research and community insights function, we have produced regular briefing papers summarising the known impact of COVID-19 on Londoners' mental health and wellbeing, implications for response and recovery planning, and suggested actions we take – locally, sub-regionally and regionally – to address immediate and anticipated future needs.

As London continues to respond to and recover from COVID-19, Londoners continue to cope with significant levels of uncertainty. It is clear that the detrimental impact on mental health is likely to last much longer than the physical health impacts, characterised by nuanced experiences and complex intersectional challenges. The declaration of a Level 4 National Incident on 12 December 2021, and in recognition of the impact on the NHS of both supporting the vital increase in the vaccination programme and preparing for a potentially significant increase in COVID-19 cases is a reminder of the unpredictability of this crisis.

In response to this and with the aim to support regional, sub-regional and local partners across London to respond to the latest scenario and anticipate what might be on the horizon, the scope of these briefings will change to consider issues across the public domain of society, wider than the direct impact of COVID-19, recognising the socio-economic and political factors that contribute to poor mental health and wellbeing.

We will review and analyse the evidence base relevant to public mental health and the factors which influence it for Londoners, synthesise our findings, and share them with stakeholders to influence change in the system.

We hope to challenge and scrutinise the representativeness and inclusivity of information, and so comments and feedback are welcome and encouraged. If you would like to get in touch about this work please contact Helen Daly (helen.daly4@nhs.net), Thrive LDN Research and Evaluation Lead, and/ or Dan Barrett (d.barrett@nhs.net), Thrive LDN Director.

Scope, methodology and limitations

Scope

The scope for this work is population-wide mental health, examining the attributes, characteristics and prevalence of mental wellbeing, distress, and illness as well as the wider determinants of mental health.

The work has a focus on health equity and the socio-economic, political and environmental factors that impact Londoner's opportunity for good mental health and wellbeing and contribute to human suffering and distress.

Our intention is to provide up-to-date evidence on mental health and wellbeing in London, which will help inform our stakeholders knowledge and capability to enable a mental health in all policies approach.

Methodology

The methodology is based on the pragmatic review of research and triangulation of multiple sources of relevant evidence, including population mental health data, analysis of the UK society and economy, and insights collected as part of Thrive LDN's ongoing community engagement activities.

This rich and diverse range of information is methodologically varied and spans across different contexts and sample sizes, which in turn makes drawing comparisons and overall synthesis challenging. To ensure a level of rigour and reliable interpretation of the evidence, regular challenge sessions are held within the core team working on this, as well as with wider team members and partners, in order to test interpretation of data and assumptions made.

Limitations

Fundamentally, insights are limited by the availability of data and information. There will undoubtedly be data and information sources the team are unaware of and would appreciate being made aware of.

However, overall, representativeness and inclusiveness has been identified as a limitation across all sources of data and information, with a lack of sufficient, granular intelligence available on the experiences and needs of different disadvantaged and marginalised communities in London.

For COVID-19 specifically, the data and intelligence has been collated to inform the initial public mental health response and recovery. For many factors, it is still too soon to draw any definitive conclusions about possible shifts in mental health and wellbeing since the beginnings of the pandemic and anticipate any future trends.

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