



Mental
health &
wellbeing



Support for life

Living with a long-term diagnosis

Around 9% of the UK population have a mental health condition due to living with one or more long-term physical conditions¹. Other causes of long-term mental health issues can include recurring depression, severe mental conditions - such as bipolar disorder or schizophrenia, post-traumatic stress disorder, severe phobias, substance abuse and Alzheimer's as well as conditions brought on by brain injury.

You don't have to cope on your own; living with a long-term diagnosis can mean that you run the risk of becoming socially isolated, so it's important to seek help.

Get help

A long-term diagnosis means the condition you're facing is unlikely to ever go away, although the symptoms may be eased by correct medication and therapy treatments; so make sure you tap into all of the help on offer through the NHS.

Whilst you may feel there is still stigma attached to discussing mental health conditions, do try to find someone who understands the issues you're faced with on a daily basis. This may be a family member, friend or your GP. Talking about how you feel can really help you to come to terms with your condition and the impact on your life.

¹Mental Health - quoting from Department of Health (2011)

Your rights

If a condition lasts for more than 12 months and affects your day-to-day life it may be considered a disability. If you fit certain criteria under the Equality Act 2010 your rights as an employee, student and individual are protected.

There is also a wide range of financial support available. This ranges from sick pay and benefits to discounts on things like council tax and help with housing. All of this help may be dependent on your income and savings levels - so it's important to get good quality advice.

Keep to the plan

Many long-term conditions can't be cured, they have to be managed. Often people are feeling so much better after treatment that they think they can stop treatment/medicine but then relapse.

Work with your mental health specialist on developing a long-term treatment plan and try to keep to it, even on challenging days. This plan may include many things

that you will have to do for yourself, so find ways to make sure that they become part of everyday life.

Managing a new life

Some of the things you may have taken for granted, e.g. certain hobbies, driving, doing sports, being able to drink alcohol, etc. you may not be able to enjoy anymore. Rather than focusing on what you've lost, try and find new things to enjoy.

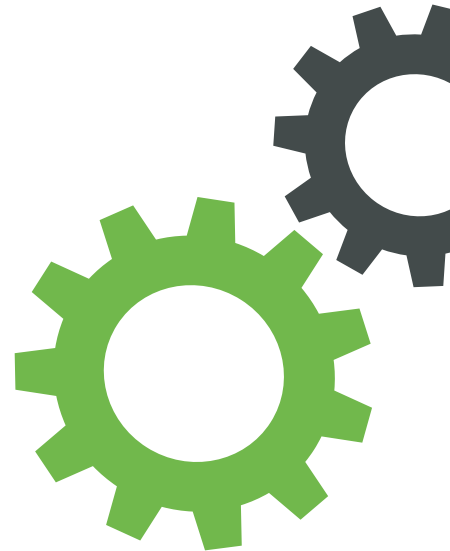
You may need to review your work situation as well. It may be that you won't be able to do the job you were doing before.

There are organisations that can help you to find more suitable work.

Specialised Help

There may be groups and charities out there that are specialists in your specific condition.

Find out how they can support you.



Further sources of help

- Disability rights
www.gov.uk/rights-disabled-person/overview
- Financial help for disabled
www.gov.uk/financial-help-disabled
- Mental Health Foundation
www.mentalhealth.org.uk
- Mind
www.mind.org.uk
- Living with mental illness
www.rethink.org/living-with-mental-illness
- Benefits Fact Sheet
- Living with Mental Health Fact Sheet

www.ben.org.uk

f /BenSupport4Auto

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Free, confidential helpline:
08081 311 333

Ben - Motor and Allied Trades Benevolent Fund. Lynwood Court, Lynwood Village, Rise Road, Ascot SL5 0FG. A charity registered in England and Wales (no.297877) and Scotland (no.SC039842). Registered with the Homes and Communities Agency (no. LH3766).

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