

A Message to Prospective Deputies

The recent Guernsey and Alderney Wellbeing Survey 2023, published by the States of Guernsey Public Health Services, has highlighted several crucial data points regarding mental health and wellbeing.

- 48.6%** of individuals in work or education reported that their work often or always causes them stress or anxiety.
- 12.1%** of respondents identified with low mental health, a figure that rises to **26.8%** among those aged 16-24. In the age bracket 16-24, **no females** indicated with high mental wellbeing status.
- 15.5%** are intensely emotionally lonely (lacking a close or intimate relationship).
- 34.9%** are intensely socially lonely (missing a wider social network).
- 35.6%** have experienced a significant amount of stress in the past year.

As a community, it is imperative that we

- **tackle the root causes of mental ill health and poor mental wellbeing**
- **proactively help those needing support**
- **address inequalities in support provision**
- **ensure timely access to necessary services for those who need them.**

As an independent mental health charity supporting the Bailiwick, we urge all prospective candidates to ensure that mental health and wellbeing is integral to all decision-making processes. Early intervention and prevention enables:

- Living well in our society
- Contributing to our community
- Minimising longer term economic pressures

We urge you to consider the ongoing financial costs and impacts of poor mental health concerning:

- Housing
- Cost of living
- Education
- The very fabric of our society

Decisions should not be driven by short-term gains. We must address fundamental issues rather than merely papering over the cracks.

Data from the Wellbeing Survey has highlighted needs and identified gaps, and we need to focus on areas that require more immediate attention:

- Young people, particularly those aged 16-24
- Individuals residing in affordable housing
- Females
- Those on low incomes
- Households with children aged under 16

To the elected candidates: as an independent mental health charity, we ask you to consider the challenges of mental health and wellbeing in all your actions and we will challenge your decisions if necessary.

The next assembly must lead by example and cultivate a culture of respect. Consider your language and rhetoric — it's possible to disagree with someone while maintaining respectful dialogue.

Candidates, reflect on your own mental health and wellbeing, and be mindful of how your words and actions impact the wider community. The effects on mental health and wellbeing should be a critical consideration in all policy decisions.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss our work at Guernsey Mind with you in further detail. Please contact us on 01481 722959 or email info@guernseymind.org.gg