Joint Manifesto Submission from the NICE Guidelines Stakeholder Coalition

I am writing on behalf of a coalition of 40 mental health organisations to call on the next Government to prioritise patient choice when accessing mental health services in its manifesto. The coalition was formed over two years ago when our campaign for NICE to adopt sound methodology in producing its guideline for depression in adults – which is the basis for the treatment recommendations for the millions of adults in the UK with depression – began. I attach our position statement, which lists the participating organisations.

Improving Choice and Access to a Range of Psychological Therapies

We believe that choice of psychological intervention is crucial to achieving better outcomes for the public when accessing mental health services; with research repeatedly showing that patient preference has a significant impact on treatment outcome.

The success of integrating shared decision making and patient choice into our national health service has been seriously hampered by an ambition to identify the most effective treatment for a specific disorder and the belief in a one-size fits all model for mental health. To support the idea that there exists a hierarchy of evidence-based treatments does not only ignore the suffering individual, but moreover operates in contradiction to the ethos of offering patient choice.

We believe that treatment guideline developers, service providers and commissioners need to recognise that a range of psychotherapeutic interventions have a robust evidence base and are as effective as each other, as well as medical treatments. Patient feedback shows that different psychotherapeutic modalities have had different impacts at different periods in their lives.

We are therefore calling on the next Government to deliver a full range of psychological therapies to all individuals accessing mental health services across the UK, to both provide a realistic opportunity for shared decision making and to accommodate patient preference.

With best wishes,

Felicitas

Dr Felicitas Rost, President, Society for Psychotherapy Research (SPR) UK