

Recovery Colleges

A Recovery College gives people with mental health problems the chance to access education and training programmes designed to help them on their road to recovery. These courses are devised and delivered by people with personal experience of mental illness working together with mental health professionals.

Recovery Colleges help people become experts in self-care and gives them the skills and confidence they need for work, and to get on with their lives. At Recovery Colleges, people also socialise and are considered 'students' rather than 'patients'.

Research teams and mental health professionals across the country are working with people with experience of mental health problems to test different ways of offering support on recovery journeys.

Government support

The government is supporting the concept of recovery – that an individual should be given support to build his or her own life in the way they want to, whether or not the symptoms of the mental illness remain.

The government's mental health strategy for England is called [No health without mental health](#). One of the strategy's six main objectives is that 'more people with mental health problems will recover'. The strategy explains this by saying: 'more people who develop mental health problems will have a good quality of life – greater ability to manage their own lives, stronger social relationships, a greater sense of purpose, the skills they need for living and working, improved chances in education, better employment rates and suitable a stable place to live.'

Another two of the six objectives also support recovery – that care and support offered by mental health services should give people the 'greatest choice and control over their own lives, in the least restrictive environment' and that 'fewer people will experience stigma and discrimination.'

The government is also supporting other policies that promote choice in health and social care.

Personalisation describes a way of making sure people who need care and support in the community have the opportunity to plan and choose services that help them live the way they want to, rather than being told what is best for them by professionals.

Instead of organising and commissioning services on behalf of people who need social care, local authorities allocate a sum of money (a personal budget) to eligible

people who use these funds to organise services that meet their needs and enhance their life.

[Personal budgets](#) are also being introduced into health services.

A personal health budget is an allocation of NHS funding given to a patient (after an assessment). The individual then personally controls that sum of money and uses it to buy services to meet their health needs.