

MENTAL HEALTH

A hidden disease with a growing cost

H1	ACT	PLAN	TRACK	PARK	OPP	THR	NEU
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[One in four adults and one in 10 children experience mental illness](#), and many more of us know and care for people who do.

Untreated mental health problems account for 13% of the total global burden of disease. It is projected that, by 2030, mental health problems (particularly depression) will be the leading cause of mortality and morbidity globally. [The 2013 Chief Medical Officer's report estimated that the wider costs of mental health problems to the UK economy are £70–100 billion per year](#) – 4.5% of gross domestic product (GDP).

In 2019, [Randstad reported that 37% of students felt their mental health had deteriorated since they started in higher education](#) - with 64% of those believing that their studies and university lifestyle were the cause. Isolation caused by Covid-19 lockdowns and a change to online teaching has caused [increasing issues for many, particularly females](#).

[Students responding to the Student Covid Insight Studies \(SCIS\)](#) in late 2020 reported lower levels of life satisfaction, life worth and happiness, and higher levels of anxiety, compared with the general population responding through the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey.

A survey by [WONKHE and Trendence \(PDF, 1.33MB\)](#) found that in October 2020, compared with May 2019, the proportion of students who felt lonely daily or weekly is much larger (50% compared with 39%),

COST OF CARE

Caring for our most vulnerable keeps getting more expensive

H2	ACT	PLAN	TRACK	PARK	OPP	THR	NEU
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Local authority spending on adult social care in England fell 8% in real terms between 2009–10 and 2016–17, but was protected relative to spending on other local authority services.

[The population has been growing, so spending on adult social services per adult fell by 13.5% in England](#). This doesn't take into account that the population is ageing, which will have put additional pressure on adult social care services.

Looking forward, funding pressures are only going to grow. The population is getting bigger and older, and expectations are rising along with the costs of meeting them. [Social care is facing high growth in demand pressures](#), which are projected to rise by around £18 billion by 2033–34, at an annual rate of 3.9%. This is a combination of growing and ageing populations, rising numbers of people living longer with long-term conditions, and rising costs of providing care services.

[Central estimates suggest that by 2033–34 there will be 4.4 million more people in the UK aged 65 and over](#). The number aged over 85 is likely to rise by 1.3 million – that's almost as much as the increase in the entire under-65 population.

How social care costs will be paid for in future, especially given the levels of public debt caused by the Covid-19 response, is an open question.

FURTHER READING

