Manifesto Analysis 2017
General Election: Northern Ireland parties

Policy asks from the Mental Health Foundation

The Mental Health Foundation calls on the next Prime Minister to:

- A National Thriving Mental Health Programme to spread public understanding about how to look after our mental health and to build community resilience.
- A Royal Commission to investigate effective ways to prevent poor mental health and to develop good mental health, and highlighting opportunities to reduce risks.
- A Mentally Thriving Nation Report each year to track progress, emerging issues and actions required.
- A ‘100% Health’ Check to help people to manage their mental health and reduce their risks as well as identifying where they need professional mental health support.
- Fair Funding for Mental Health Research, commensurate with the scale of mental health problems in our society.

This report provides an overview of each of the party manifestos for Northern Ireland. We analyse how each of the party’s agendas address mental health and wellbeing regarding: Communities, Children and Young People, Housing and Homelessness, Welfare and Work (page references for each party manifesto are included).
The Parties

The 2017 General Election is Northern Ireland’s fourth election in two years, not including the EU referendum. Although Northern Ireland has 18 MPs in the House of Commons, four of these seats are held by Sinn Féin representatives, who maintain a policy of absenteeism. The remaining 14 Northern Irish MPs are made up of eight from the DUP party, three SDLP, two Ulster Unionist and one Independent.

Each of the 2017 manifestos are centred on how Brexit will be negotiated and what outcomes can be achieved for Northern Ireland – as a part of the UK which overwhelmingly voted to remain. Policy pledges on mental health provisions, housing and welfare have been made by some of the parties however the overarching theme is that of how to reform democratic institutions, and rule.

**Alliance Party of Northern Ireland**
Leader: Naomi Long

**Democratic Unionist Party**
Leader: Arlene Foster

**Sinn Féin of Northern Ireland**
Leader: Michelle O’Neill

**Social Democratic and Labour Party**
Leader: Colum Eastwood

**Ulster Unionist Party**
Leader: Robin Swann

**Green Party in Northern Ireland**
Leader: Steven Agnew
Alliance Party of Northern Ireland manifesto

Read the manifesto in full [here](#)

Children and Young People

Restoring a UK-wide target on reducing child poverty. (p25)

Community

Oppose any proposed repeal of the Human Rights Act or withdrawal from the European Convention on Human Rights. (p13)

Fully contribute to international obligations to look after refugees and people fleeing persecution on the basis of political opinion, religion, sexual orientation and other grounds. (p15)

Continue to support the offering sanctuary to refugees from the Syrian Civil War. (p15)

Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) manifesto

Read the full manifesto [here](#)

Welfare

Support proposals to further increase the personal allowance. (p9)

The DUP will challenge any attacks on universal benefits. (p9)

Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) manifesto

Read the full manifesto [here](#)

Mental Health

Support community based provisions to tackle mental health. (p16)

Welfare

The SDLP will continue to oppose the Welfare Cap and possible regional application (p12)

Continue to put pressure on the Government to review and amend work assessments. (p12)
Call for 3,000 new social homes. (p14)

Calls for a duty of cooperation to be placed on statutory agencies to tackle homelessness (p14)

Communities

Support the introduction of an anti-poverty strategy, addressing social exclusion and deprivation. (p13)

Oppose any attempt to repeal the Human Rights Act. (p23)

Sinn Féin manifesto

Read the full manifesto here

Mental Health

The party will resist any cuts to health care and mental health. (p8)

Ulster Unionist Party UUP

Read the full manifesto here

Green Party in Northern Ireland

Read the full manifesto here

Mental Health

Look to rebalance health spending with focus on prevention, reducing the need for costly treatments in the future. (p8)

Welfare

Set a national minimum living wage for all ages. This will be equal to the living wage, as calculated by the Living Wage Foundation. (p10)

Housing and homelessness
Provide 100,000 new units of social housing, including at least 2,000 in Northern Ireland, per year. (p10)

Maintain the social housing stock by freezing the Right to Buy scheme. (p10)

Protect the budget for supported housing. (p10)

Abolish the “bedroom tax”. (p10)

**Community**

Defend the UK Human Rights Act. (p10)

Ensure that the UK takes in its fair share of refugees, and meets its prior commitments to this. (p10)

Ensure that treatment for refugees after arrival fulfils good human rights practice. (p10)
The Mental Health Foundation, a UK wide charity, has been in existence for 65 years. We focus on researching and evaluating fresh approaches to mental health with a view to advocating helpful policy change and the roll out of best practice more widely. Our work is centred on prevention – we believe that there is far more scope for interventions that prevent people developing mental health problems and which sustain recovery. Access to mental health services is critical, but as a society we also need to focus on bringing down the need for these services and developing good mental health for all.

London Office:
Mental Health Foundation
Colechurch House
1 London Bridge Walk
London SE1 2SX

Cardiff Office:
Mental Health Foundation
Castle Court
6 Cathedral Road
Cardiff, CF11 9LJ

Glasgow Office:
Mental Health Foundation
Merchants House
30 George Square

Registered Charity No. England 801130 Scotland SC039714. Company Registration No. 2350846