

Event led by mental health survivors  
and radical psy professionals  
LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE FRINGE 2017

# HOW DO WE GET MENTAL WEALTH?

6-8pm, Sunday 24 September 2017  
Ashdown Room, Holiday Inn  
137 King's Road, Brighton BN1 2JF  
Wheelchair accessible

**Chair:** Nicola Saunders

Mental Health Activist Alliance

**Speakers:**

**Denise McKenna**

Co-founder Mental Health Resistance Network

**Paul Atkinson**

Free Psychotherapy Network

# For more than 30 years, we've suffered the violent exploitation and extraction of our mental wealth by successive governments pursuing neoliberal policies

## Where we are now

- ▶ **A dramatic increase in depression, anxiety and other symptoms of psychological distress** in response to the emotional pressure of surviving extractive neoliberal capitalism: poverty, public services cuts, inadequate housing, social exclusion, broken communities, isolation, low wages, the destruction of the welfare safety net, precarious and dehumanising working conditions, debt, growing inequalities, loss of creative opportunities, extraction of monetary resources.
- ▶ **Relentless cuts to NHS and community mental health services** – behind a smokescreen of empty concern and broken promises.
- ▶ **The medicalisation of mental ill health**, with emphasis on professional expertise and authority, individual diagnostic labelling and mechanistic treatments via drugs and short-term psychological therapies based on positive thinking, behavioural change and 'recovery' – all aimed at fitting people back into the 'realities' of a neoliberal status quo.
- ▶ **The abandonment, psycho-compulsion and cruel abuse of people with severe and enduring mental health difficulties** through the withdrawal of supportive services, demonisation as scroungers, benefit cuts and sanctioning, dehumanising fitness to work assessments and the reinvention of workhouse ideology as the cure-all for mental ill health.

## What we need from a radical Labour government

- ▶ **ALL government policy should be guided by a 'social model' of physical, emotional and spiritual health.** Neoliberalism and social inequality undermine mental wealth as well as material wealth.
- ▶ **Investment in decent NHS and community mental health services** that respond to people's individual pain and difficulties. This should include access to a wide range of long and short-term therapies, and a radical move away from one-size-fits-all treatments.
- ▶ **A fundamental shift towards genuinely user-led services and support**, based on respect for the way people understand and live with their emotional pain and distress. The support offered should be led by people's first-hand experience of what they need.
- ▶ **An end to the 'work cure' ideology in public policy.** People with severe and enduring mental health difficulties need to be treated with respect and compassion. They need to be provided with the means to support themselves for as long as they need it.

*Find out more about the event's organisers here: <http://wp.me/P4gT5y-oG>*