

## Notes from the Front Line

# United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy: Questions to London Mayoral Candidates

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**ABSTRACT** *In May 2012 London elected a new Mayor. In the run-up to the election the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy voiced its concern for the future of psychotherapy and psychotherapeutic counselling in and outside of London by way of questions to the main candidates for Mayor of London. These “notes” are the questions put to the candidate and the answers from the three candidates who responded, namely Jenny Jones (Green Party), Ken Livingstone (Labour), and Brian Paddick (Liberal Democrat). Copyright © 2013 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.*

**Key words:** Mayor of London candidates; Jenny Jones; Ken Livingstone; Brian Paddick; United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy; mental health services; Health and Social Care Act; ethnic groups; sexualities

## INTRODUCTION

In difficult economic and social times, mental health and wellbeing only grows as an issue of public concern. In the United Kingdom, the UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) continues to champion the value of psychotherapy and psychotherapeutic counselling services at both local and national levels, and to campaign for the wider provision of such services for the public benefit. In the run-up to the 2012 London Mayoral Campaign, the UKCP asked a selection of Mayoral candidates to answer questions on key issues that included mental health service cuts across London, access to therapy, and reparative therapy. It received responses from Jenny Jones (Green Party), Ken Livingstone (Labour), Brian Paddick (Liberal Democrat); neither Siobhan Benita (Independent), nor Boris Johnson (Conservative), who went on to win the election, responded.

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## QUESTION 1

**UKCP** – We [the UKCP] appreciate the present challenging financial climate and recognise that the way mental health services are configured must evolve to meet the local needs of those being served. However, we are increasingly concerned that services in London (and outside) are threatened with closure not on the basis of clinical need but because of the demand of accountants. These cuts in mental health services come at a time of critical need unheard of for many generations. We have worked closely with the British Psychoanalytic Council following proposed closures at internationally renowned services such as the North East London Foundation Trust's Forest House and the South London and Maudsley Foundation Trust to get proposals reviewed because of a failure to consult and to take a strategic overview of what was planned (for more information see [www.ukcp.org.uk/servicesunderthreat](http://www.ukcp.org.uk/servicesunderthreat)). Last month [April 2012] we called a meeting of psychological therapy organisations to discuss growing concern about how patient interest was beginning to suffer. Do you agree with us that changes in mental health services should only be on the basis of demonstrated clinical need and closures and cuts should only follow consultation with both staff and service users? What more can you do if elected to ensure that front line services benefitting the public are maintained wherever possible in these challenging financial times and to ensure that access to required help does not become a postcode lottery?

## Responses

**Jenny Jones** – We [the Green Party] believe in a properly funded, publicly provided health service. We will argue consistently against attempts to privatise or weaken the NHS, while pushing for better access to services in areas such as mental health and family planning. Greens on the London Assembly have already supported local campaigns against privatisation and hospital closures. Our manifesto includes a pledge to continue to campaign for better health services in London, including better access to contraception and family planning services, better resources for mental health services both in the community and in hospitals, and free prescriptions, eye tests and dental treatment.

**Ken Livingstone** – I agree that changes in mental health services should only be on the basis of demonstrated clinical need and closures and cuts should only follow consultation with both staff and service users. If elected I will use the powers and resources of the Mayor to campaign against the cuts and the break-up of the National Health Service (NHS). Mental health services have long been considered Cinderella services by NHS commissioners. That is why in my manifesto I have explicitly committed to “develop a new plan for high quality, integrated mental health services for London.” If I am elected I hope that the UKCP would be willing to work with my staff to develop such a plan.

**Brian Paddick** – While I am unable to comment on the specific cases that you highlight, any major change to mental health services in London should, of course, only take place after staff and service users are consulted. Although it is quite clear that in this tough financial climate difficult decisions have to be made, as Mayor I would do everything possible to ensure that frontline services are protected so that people receive the help they

deserve and need. Indeed, I believe that the provision of safe, modern and effective mental health services that offer real choice to patients should be a health priority in our city. As a Liberal Democrat I take mental health extremely seriously, and last year Nick Clegg and Liberal Democrat Health minister Paul Burstow announced the Coalition [government]'s mental health strategy.<sup>1</sup> In this strategy the Coalition focused on the importance of placing mental health on a par with physical health in terms of public awareness and the service patients receive – a sentiment I would wholeheartedly echo. Furthermore, as Mayor I would want to encourage local Health and Wellbeing Boards in the city to play an active role in ensuring mental health provision in their area meets the needs and wishes of individuals, so that we can build up supportive and understanding communities – with no room for a postcode lottery on mental health. As you will also of course be aware, mental health and its effects cost the economy around £110bn a year. So, rather than looking at mental health as a just a health burden, we should look at it in a way that could really revitalise our capital's economy. For instance, if we focus on investing in preventative services then we can help people to stay in work, or return to work earlier so that they can remain productive and healthier at the same time.

## QUESTION 2

**UKCP** – Much is set to change with the *Health and Social Care Act* now passed into law and the setting up of Health and Wellbeing boards and local Healthwatches. What is your vision for public mental health across the City if elected as Mayor? What can your office do to co-ordinate efforts to ensure best practice across the capital? And what action will you take to ensure that the voice of all providers and service users is heard going forward?

## Responses

**Jenny Jones** – We [the Green Party] intend to play a strong, strategic role in health to ensure that the Government's privatisation agenda doesn't threaten London's health services and that that the NHS is accountable to elected representatives and the public. We have pledged to develop a model equalities framework for General Practice consortia, providing resources and training for consortia to implement the framework in partnership with local health and wellbeing boards.

**Ken Livingstone** – The Mayor has a statutory duty to address health inequalities in London. In practice, this has been completely ignored in the last four years, especially in relation to inequalities related to mental health and access to mental health services. There is now a small public health budget within the GLA [Greater London Authority]. I will ask my new London Health Commissioner to work with mental health charities to raise the profile of common conditions like depression and challenge the stigma that too many people still attach to mental illness. More broadly as I said above, I want London to become a fairer city, with emphasis

<sup>1</sup>The Coalition government formed by Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties in May 2010.

on shared values of tolerance and mutual respect. I will encourage Health and Wellbeing Boards and local Healthwatch organisations to make mental health a central priority.

**Brian Paddick** – If we really want to tackle mental health in our city then we must increase mental health awareness amongst the general public. I would be advocating that those with personal or family experience of mental health issues should take the opportunity provided by the establishment of local Healthwatch to champion mental health in their area. I also think that to increase mental health awareness we need to focus on the younger generation; after all, it will be their attitudes that will shape mental health in the future. It is also the case that half of those with mental health problems first experience symptoms by the age of 14. Therefore, as Mayor I would make sure that all secondary schools had access to a toolkit aimed at educating their pupils on the detection, treatment and impact of mental health. I would also make sure that teachers across London are trained to spot the signs and symptoms of mental health in their pupils so that we can get people the right support as quickly as possible. Furthermore, as a former national lead for the police service on disability and mental health issues I understand only too well the need to increase understanding of mental health in the workplace. I would therefore use my experience in this area to work with our city's largest companies in educating their staff on this important subject.

### QUESTION 3

**UKCP** – Despite attempts within our profession to change the way it's viewed, therapy is still rarely sought by young Black men, let alone considered as a career option. We have organised two successful Black Men on the Couch events (see [www.ukcp.org.uk/project\\_2020.html](http://www.ukcp.org.uk/project_2020.html)) to begin to make a difference in this area with events in Stratford and Tottenham featuring Lemn Sissay and Benjamin Zephaniah among others with a further event planned for 12 May [2012]. Over a third of London's population is made up of people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups. If elected Mayor what can you do to make sure more people generally can get the help offered by therapy and especially from this and other under-represented groups?

### Responses

**Jenny Jones** – We also want to make the reduction of income and wealth inequality a key aim of London's Health Inequalities Strategy, because life expectancy, infant mortality, low birth-weight and self-rated health are worse, and mental health problems more common, in more unequal societies. We want to help create a city where our public services help everybody flourish regardless of their gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, disability, faith or any other form of identity.

**Ken Livingstone** – I congratulate you on the work you are doing to increase awareness of psychotherapeutic services in the black community, particularly among young black men. I am happy to commit to make this a key objective of the anti-stigma campaign I have sketched out above. My plan for co-ordinated mental health services across London will have to address the unequal provision of mental health services for black and Asian Londoners and

those from other ethnic minorities and other marginalised groups like homeless people or drug users. I look forward to working with you on this issue. While in office we had considerably success starting to change the demographic profile of the police service, but these kinds of changes need a long-term sustained effort. With Boris [Johnson] the focus on BME [Black, Minority, Ethnic] recruitment to the Met[ropolitan police] was relaxed, progress has stalled and racism is creeping back.

**Brian Paddick** – One of my stated priorities as the Liberal Democrat mayoral candidate is to improve the identification of and support for prisoners with mental health problems. I think this is a powerful commitment that would serve to combat the underlying issues that lead to repeat offending amongst an under-represented group. Further to this, one of my party's manifesto commitments is to improve access to counselling for people with mental health problems, by continuing the roll-out of cognitive and behavioural therapies. Since we made this pledge in 2010, our Liberal Democrat health minister Paul Burstow announced that the Coalition's adult IAPT [Increasing Access to Psychological Therapies] programme, which provides psychological therapies for those with depression or anxiety, has increased the number of people receiving treatment and reduced the number of individuals on sick pay and benefits. In addition to this, in February this year Nick Clegg [Deputy Prime Minister and Leader of the Liberal Democrats] announced that the Children and Young People's IAPT programme would receive an extra investment of up to £22 m over the next three years in addition to the £8 m per year for four years previously pledged. I fully endorse the aspirations and successes of these programmes and would continue to support them as London Mayor.

#### QUESTION 4

**UKCP** – Last year the Core Issues Trust<sup>2</sup> put on two events in London and Belfast entitled “*The Lepers Amongst Us: Homosexuality and the Life of the Church*”. This week they attempted to take out advertisements on London buses saying: “Not gay! Ex-gay, post-gay and proud. Get over it!” to which a TfL [Transport for London] spokesperson said: “We do not believe these specific ads are consistent with TfL's commitment to a tolerant and inclusive London.” The UKCP does not consider homosexuality or bisexuality, or transsexual and transgendered states to be pathologies, mental disorders or indicative of developmental arrest. These are not symptoms to be treated by psychotherapists, in the sense of attempting to change or remove them (for more information on our work in this area see [www.ukcp.org.uk/reparative\\_therapy.html](http://www.ukcp.org.uk/reparative_therapy.html)). Do you agree with this position? And how would you work with us if elected Mayor to ensure that London is a City that welcomes people of all sexualities and is a safe space for those exploring or coming to terms with their sexuality?

#### Responses

**Jenny Jones** – Wholeheartedly. Green London Assembly members used the first ever Mayor's Question Time in 2000 to secure a registration scheme for same sex couples from

<sup>2</sup>A British Christian organisation which supports men and women with “homosexual issues”, and sees homosexuality as “a problem of *attachment and gender identity* rather than of sexuality” (see [www.core-issues.org/](http://www.core-issues.org/)).

[then] Mayor Ken Livingstone, paving the way for civil partnerships to be introduced nationally by the Government. At a stroke, we showed how the GLA could transform the lives of citizens when politicians were prepared to show leadership and fight for fairness. We have pledged to guarantee a police liaison officer in every borough to work with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender communities and send officers to schools to challenge anti-LGBT [Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered] prejudice. Each borough would under our plans also draw up an Anti-Homophobia Action Plan to remedy local hate crime hotspots working with the Gay–Straight Alliance.

**Ken Livingstone** – I wholeheartedly endorse your statement that homosexuality or bisexuality, or transsexual and transgendered should never be regarded as pathologies, mental disorders or indicative of developmental arrest. As Mayor I never allowed, and if elected will never allow racist, homophobic or other advertising that promotes bigotry on the transport network. I have always put LGB&T equality at the heart of my work, whether as leader of the GLC [Greater London Council] in the 1980s or as Mayor of London between 2000 and 2008 and I will do so again. I will continue to support [LGBT] Pride celebrations across the capital and support World Pride coming to London this year. I will re-establish the Pride annual reception at City Hall, axed by the Tory Mayor. I will also operate a zero tolerance approach to homophobic and transphobic hate crime and prioritise work with the Met[ropolitan Police], charities and campaigning groups to improve awareness, training and responses among police officers. I will overhaul TfL's advertising standards so that we never again have the scandal of homophobic advertising on buses being approved. Again, I would invite UKCP to work with me across the board on anti-discrimination programmes.

**Brian Paddick** – As the only gay mayoral candidate, I of course agree your position! I will continue to support the huge amounts of work that goes on in the city to ensure that all minority groups are welcomed and feel comfortable living here. I have a very close relationship with the Stonewall group and support their campaigns.

## QUESTION 5

**UKCP** – Finally, the mayoral job is important and carries a great deal of responsibility. What will you do to ensure you and those around you work in positive environments, free from unnecessary stress? Based on your life experiences to date, what personal tips would you give to others facing challenges?

## Responses

**Jenny Jones** – You need to create a good atmosphere in your workplace. You need to make sure you staff take holidays and breaks and also ensure they are listened to.

**Ken Livingstone** – As Mayor I developed and launched the London Works for Better Health to get major employers to understand that the health and wellbeing of their employees should be a fundamental concern (and of course this included mental health). Under Boris [Johnson]

this popular business-led programme has been allowed to wither away. I will promote a family-friendly contract for working at the GLA, if elected. This will include flexible working and jobs-sharing where possible and promote this among the firms that the GLA bodies purchases good and services from. My whole platform is about making Londoners better off and that includes their quality of life.

**Brian Paddick** After working in the Met police for 30 years, I'm well aware of the stresses that can arise in the workplace and the best ways to deal with those situations. It's vital that everyone feels confident whilst at work in an environment that anyone and everyone can be comfortable in and that is as open and honest as possible. That is the most effective way to ensure that everyone working for London is not only aware of the responsibilities they face, but never suffers from unnecessary stress.

**Brian Paddick** is a British politician, before which he was a police officer. He joined the Metropolitan Police Service in 1976; rising through the ranks, he was appointed the officer in charge of the Criminal Investigation Department at Notting Hill in 1995, then returned to New Scotland Yard, first as Superintendent of the Personnel Department in 1996 and then as Chief Superintendent in 1997. In December 2000 he was appointed Police Commander for the London Borough of Lambeth, where he worked until 2002. From 2002 until 2007, he was Deputy Assistant Commissioner in London's Metropolitan Police Service and the United Kingdom's most senior openly gay police officer. As the Liberal Democrat candidate for the London mayoral election, 2012, he came fourth, with 4.16% of the first preferences.

**Jenny Jones** is an English politician and prominent member of the Green Party of England and Wales. She has represented the Greens in the London Assembly since its creation in 2000; served as Deputy Mayor of London from May 2003 to June 2004; and has served as Chair of London Food, Green Transport Advisor, and Road Safety Ambassador. From 2006 to 2010 she was also the sole Green councillor on Southwark Council, London. She was the Green candidate for Mayor of London in the 2012 elections, coming third with 4.48% of first preferences.

**Ken Livingstone** is a British Labour Party politician who has twice held the leading political role in London local government, first as the Leader of the Greater London Council from 1981 until the Council was abolished in 1986, and then as the first elected Mayor of London from the creation of the office in 2000 until 2008. He also served as the Member of Parliament for Brent East from 1987 to 2001. He came second in the Mayoral election with 48.5% of the vote.