

## **Lepra assists the World Health Organisation on creation of persons centred road map for mental health issues relating to NTDs.**

According to Lepra's research, half of all people diagnosed with NTD's such as leprosy or lymphatic filariasis suffer from a mental health disorder as a direct result of their diagnosis.

The new roadmap document has been designed with the care of those affected in mind. The WHO has committed to understanding and better integrating psychosocial, pharmacological and educational interventions into the general framework surrounding NTDs.

The development of mental health disorders is owed in large to the prejudice surrounding the disease. People affected by NTDs are often ostracised from their families; left isolated and alone. Those that remain in their communities are often victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse.

It is estimated that NTDs affect more than 1 billion people across the world. The need for collaboration is at an all-time high, and Lepra has committed to assisting the WHO in the implementation of this.

Paul Watson, Director of Advocacy and Programmes, says that the roadmap will be instrumental in changing our understanding of mental health amongst those affected by NTDs and enable us to change the lives of those living with NTDs and their related mental health issues.

The road map proposes fundamental shifts in focus from specific diseases to people-centred approaches and to gauge programmatic impact not only on diseases averted but also on high-quality care for people affected by NTDs, to ensure that actual patient experience and suffering alleviated are documented appropriately.

During COVID-19, the emphasis on mental health resilience and support services has been even more important. Cross border collaboration will be needed to implement a person centred approach.

Lepra continues to focus on an overall holistic approach to helping those affected by NTDs like leprosy and lymphatic filariasis.

ENDS

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### **Notes for Editors**

#### **About Lepra and leprosy**

Lepra is a UK-based international specialist charity that has been working to beat leprosy since 1924. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II became Patron of Lepra in 1952, shortly after the

death of her father King George VI, who had been Lepra's Patron since the charity was founded in 1924.

Leprosy affects over 7 million of the most vulnerable people in the world, causing life-changing disabilities and attracting terrible prejudice and discrimination. **But there is a cure.**

Lepra works to beat leprosy in India, Bangladesh and Mozambique by finding, diagnosing and treating people affected by the disease. By raising awareness, pushing for early detection and supporting people living with disabilities caused by leprosy, Lepra works towards a day when this disease no longer destroys lives.

Last year, the charity reached 301,000 people through diagnosis, treatment and care. It reached a further 1.7 million people through health education and events to raise awareness of leprosy and other neglected diseases.

Find out more about Lepra on its website and social media channels:

Website: [www.lepra.org.uk](http://www.lepra.org.uk)

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/LepraUK>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LEPRAUK/>

You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/LEPRAHinA>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/LepraUK/>

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