

**Easy Read**



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



# Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Our plans for mental health and wellbeing in Wales

We want to know what you think

This document was written by the **Welsh Government**. It is an easy read version of the ‘**Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy**’.

**February 2024**

# How to use this document



This is an easy read document. You may still need support to read it. Ask someone you know to help you.



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. You can check what the words in blue mean on **page 36**.



If you need support with your mental health you can ring the **CALL Helpline: 0800 132 737**. Or for urgent support please call the **NHS on 111** and **press 2**.



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Where the document says **we**, this means the **Welsh Government**. For more information contact:

**Website:** [www.gov.wales/mental-health-and-wellbeing-strategy](http://www.gov.wales/mental-health-and-wellbeing-strategy)

**Email:** [mentalhealthandvulnerablegroups@llyw.cymru](mailto:mentalhealthandvulnerablegroups@llyw.cymru)



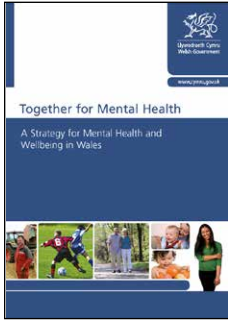
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# About this plan



We first made a plan about **mental health** and **wellbeing** in 2012. It was called Together for Mental Health.



Everyone has **mental health**. It is about how someone is feeling in their mind. It is about our feelings, thoughts and **wellbeing**.



**Wellbeing** is about feeling comfortable, healthy, or happy.



This is our new plan. It is based on what people have told us.



**We want to know what you think about our ideas.**



Please read this document. Then please answer the questions in the response form called:

## **Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy - Response form.**



**Please send us your answers by Tuesday 11 June 2024.**

## **Our overall vision for Wales:**



We have based this plan on what people told us.



We want people in Wales to live in communities that support:

- their **mental health**



- and **wellbeing.**





We want people to be treated fairly. And to have the support they need.

### The Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy:



- is for people of all ages



- puts people first



- talks about how all parts of life affect someone's **mental health** and **wellbeing**.



Some people are more at risk of having poor **mental health** than others. This includes people with **protected characteristics**.



**Protected characteristics** is a term used to describe some groups of people who are often treated unfairly. For example:

- Disabled people
- People who may have a different colour skin, different religion or may come from another country
- People of different ages
- Lesbian, gay and bisexual people
- A number of other groups of people.



Services should support people whoever they are, whatever needs they have.



It is important that our services:

- are anti-racist
- treat people fairly
- can be accessed in Welsh



We need to focus on supporting people early on. This means supporting people before issues get worse.



Helping people to improve their **mental health** is really important.



Everyone is different. And people will have their own goals when it comes to getting better. **Mental health** services should support people to achieve these goals.





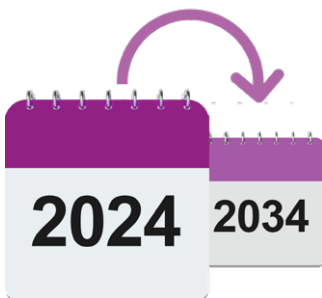
People should never feel ashamed or judged for having **mental health** issues.



This plan is about protecting **mental health** and **wellbeing**. And about supporting people with **mental health conditions**.



**Mental health conditions** affect our feelings, thoughts, and behaviour.



This plan says what we want to do over the next 10 years. It will be checked regularly.

We have written **4 Vision Statements**. They are our goals for the future, and how we will get there:



**1. People can protect and improve their mental health and wellbeing.**



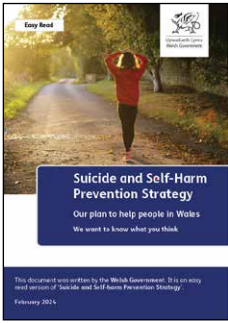
**2. The Welsh Government works together to improve mental health and wellbeing.**



**3. People get support whoever they speak to. And they get the right support when they first ask for help.**



**4. People get the support from services that is right for them. They get this support as quickly as possible, and in the right way.**



There will also be a plan called the **Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Strategy**.



We want to know what you think about this plan too. [www.gov.wales/suicide-and-self-harm-prevention-strategy](http://www.gov.wales/suicide-and-self-harm-prevention-strategy)

# Some terms used to talk about mental health and wellbeing



## Mental health

**Mental health** is how someone is feeling in their mind. It is about **feelings**, thoughts, and **wellbeing**.



Good **mental health** helps people cope with the stresses of life. When people have good **mental health**, they can:

- live well
- learn well
- work well
- play and socialise
- and be part of their community.

## Mental health conditions



These are conditions that affect our **feelings**, thoughts, and behaviour.



Conditions like **anxiety** and **depression** are **mental health conditions**. They affect someone's life a lot. There are many other conditions too.



**Anxiety** is when someone feels worried or stressed a lot of the time.



**Depression** is a low mood that lasts a long time.



But there are other symptoms too for both these conditions.



We all feel sad sometimes. And we all go through difficult times. This is a normal part of life. But when things like this go on for a long time it could be a **mental health condition**.





## Mental wellbeing

This is when you are happy and comfortable in yourself. You see yourself as being able to cope well.



## Emotions

Emotions are how you feel about something. And how your body reacts. For example, if you are scared, you may feel your heart beat faster.



## Feelings

Feelings are how we experience our emotions and the meaning we give to them. **Feelings** are different for everyone.

# Our principles for the strategy

This strategy is built on **10 principles**. This means **ideas** the strategy is based on. These are to make sure Wales is a place where:



- Support is based around your rights as a person.



- Support is open to everyone.



- Support looks at everything that affects **mental health**.



- Support is for all ages.



- Support is delivered by a skilled workforce.



- Support understands **trauma**.

**Trauma** is any experience that can cause distress or **anxiety**. **Trauma** can be a one-off event, a number of events. Or it could be an ongoing situation.



- Support steps in quickly.



- Support puts people and their needs first.



- Support is connected and has **no wrong door**. This means someone gets help whoever they go to.



- Support is based on evidence and achieving goals.

# The 4 Vision Statements



## 1. People can protect and improve their mental health and wellbeing

Looking after our **mental health** and **wellbeing** can:



- Help protect us from getting **mental health conditions**.



- Help us cope better if we do get a **mental health condition**.



We want to make it as easy as possible for people to look after their **mental health** and **wellbeing**.



We want them to have all the support they need.



We want them to know how to get support when they need it.

Many issues can affect **mental health** and **wellbeing**. For example:



- Money problems



- Poor physical health and disability. This is because it can make life harder.



- Experiencing **trauma**.



It can be hard to deal with our feelings in difficult times.





There are skills we can learn that can help. And other things can help like:



- Living in safe communities.



- Having good relationships with others.



- Feeling safe.



Things that happen to us as we grow up can impact our **mental health**.



It is important to support the **mental health** and **wellbeing** of babies, children and young people.

Here are some things everyone can do. They can help protect and improve our **mental health** and **wellbeing**:



- Connect with other people and develop good relationships with others.



- Be active, move more, and keep fit.

- Be creative.



- Take an interest in nature and other things going on around us.

- Learn something new and have hobbies.



- Help others.

- Find time to relax.

- Find time to play.



- Sleep well.



Some people will find these things harder than others. It is important people get the support they need to do them.



People also need support to deal with the difficult things they go through.

The community plays a big role in good **mental health** and **wellbeing**. For example:



- if there are good services available,



- green spaces like parks,



- and things to do.

## This is what we will do:



1. Build our knowledge about how to protect and improve our **mental health** and **wellbeing**.



2. Support people to learn more about **mental health** and **wellbeing**. This will help them to look after it.



3. Help people in Wales to talk about **mental health** and **wellbeing** more.



4. Make sure people with poor **mental health** and **mental health conditions** are treated fairly.



5. Make sure staff working with people know how to support people with poor **mental health**.



6. Develop **social prescribing** across Wales.

**Social prescribing** helps connect people to groups and services in the community. It is a way to help them manage their health and **wellbeing**.



7. Find the best ways to help people learn about services in their community.



8. Work with big organisations to help develop more community services.



9. Help people understand how **mental health** and **wellbeing** is affected by things as they grow up.





## 2. The Welsh Government works together to improve mental health and wellbeing

All parts of Welsh Government must think about **mental health** when:



- making decisions



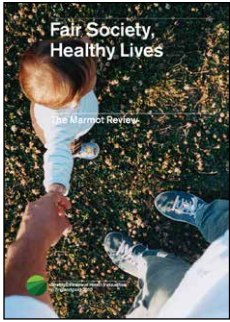
- developing plans.



Many things in life can affect someone's **mental health** and **wellbeing**. We want to make sure people have the support and help for the things that worry them most.



We need to think about all the things that affect people's **mental health**. And what to do to improve them.



There was a study called the **Marmot Review**. This showed that certain things can improve **mental health**. Including:



- Giving every child the best start in life.
- Supporting all children, young people, and adults. Help them to do their best and have control over their lives.



- Having fair employment and good work for all.



- Having a healthy standard of living for all.
- Having healthy places and communities.



- Helping people be healthy.



In all our work, we need to think about these things. For example, children's services, employment, and housing.

## This is what we will do:



1. Make sure all parts of Welsh Government think about **mental health**.



2. Keep this strategy up to date with other laws and policies across Wales.



3. Measure how this strategy is making a difference to people's **mental health** and **wellbeing**. This will help us learn what works and improve.



4. Use the **NYTH/NEST** framework. This is a planning tool for **mental health** services.



5. Share information about how best to carry out **care and treatment plans**. These are used for people being treated for **mental health conditions**. We need these plans to think about the different parts of someone's life.



### 3. People get support whoever they speak to. And they get the right support when they first ask for help



Organisations working with people need to know how to support good **mental health**. This includes social care, housing and justice.



Services should work together to give people the support they need. They need to:



- Share information. So people do not have to keep repeating the same thing.



- Understand what other services do.

- Know when and how to help someone access support from somewhere else .



- Listen to people.



We will also make sure they know how to support **neurodivergent** people.



**Neurodivergent** people can also have **mental health conditions**.

**Neurodivergent** means people whose brains work differently. For example, autism is a **neurodivergent** condition.

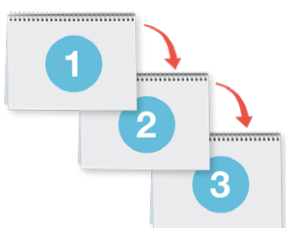


If everyone learns more about **trauma**, it will help improve **mental health** and **wellbeing**. People will be able to get help earlier and in the right way.

This is what we will do:



1. Make sure all staff have the right advice so they support everyone in the right ways.



2. Make sure all support is joined up, so no one faces a gap in support.





3. Make sure services know more about **trauma**.  
And how they can support people who have experienced **trauma**.



4. Improve **mental health** support in schools.



5. Make sure people get the right support through pregnancy, birth and early years.



6. Make sure our policies, actions and services follow:

- **The All Wales Standards for Accessible Communication and Information.**
- **The Welsh Language Standards and Cymraeg 2050.**



And that policies, actions and services respect and value children's rights and human rights.



#### 4. People get the support from services that is right for them. They get this as quickly as possible, and in the right way



We want services to put people and their needs first, and to be good quality and **recovery-focused**.



Recovery is about getting better. **Recovery-focused** means supporting people to decide what recovery means for them. And developing their strengths to help them achieve that recovery.



We want people to get the support they need early on. This means, before their **mental health condition** gets worse.



We need to think about people who have other needs too. For example, people who have problems with drugs or alcohol.



We want people to be able to get **talking therapy** when they need it and be helped with **guided self-help**.



**Talking therapy** is when someone works with a therapist to talk through the issues they have.



**Guided self-help** is when someone works through an online course or workbook. There will be support from someone else.



**Mental health** services need to be planned well and meet people's needs.



We want to support people better when moving from one service to another. For example, young people moving into adult services.



We need to keep improving support for people in a **mental health** crisis. This means someone who is in need of urgent support.



There are online and phone support services. But we need to improve urgent face-to-face support too.



We need to make sure that people understand their rights under the **Mental Health Act**.

### This is what we will do:



1. Make sure services know how to run good quality **mental health** services.



2. Listen to people who have experience of **mental health conditions**. So that we can understand how to improve services.



3. Develop different therapies to support different **mental health conditions**.



4. Make sure people living with long-term **mental health conditions** get the right support.



5. Look at the best ways to run community **mental health** services.



6. Make sure **neurodivergent** people and people with drug and alcohol, and **mental health** needs get the right support.



7. Make sure the Welsh language is supported.



8. Grow and improve online services so they connect to services better. And more people get help, advice and assessments.

# Improving the mental health system

To improve **mental health** services as a whole we will:



- Develop a plan for using information, computer systems and online services better.



- Improve information about services. Including information that is online.



- Support staff working in **mental health**. And make sure they are trained well.



- Improve the buildings we have for **mental health** services. And make sure they are accessible. This means people can use them whatever their needs are.





- Improve the words we use for **mental health**. Make sure they are the same across services.



- Check all patient information to make sure it is easy to understand.

# Hard words

## Anxiety

This is when someone feels worried or stressed a lot of the time.

## Depression

This is a low mood that lasts a long time.

## Emotions

Emotions are how you feel about something. And how your body reacts. For example, if you are scared, you may feel your heart beat faster.

## Feelings

Feelings are how we experience our emotions and the meaning we give to them. Feelings are different for everyone.

## Guided self-help

This is when someone works through an online course or workbook. There will be support from someone else.

## Mental Health

Everyone has mental health. It is about how someone is feeling in their mind. It is about our feelings, thoughts and wellbeing. Wellbeing is about feeling comfortable, healthy, or happy.

## Mental health conditions

These affect our feelings, thoughts, and behaviour.

## Mental wellbeing

This is when you are happy and comfortable in yourself. You see yourself as being able to cope well.

## Neurodivergent

This means people whose brains work differently. For example, autism is a neurodivergent condition.

## Protected characteristics

This is a term used to describe some groups of people who are often treated unfairly. For example:

- Disabled people
- People who may have a different colour skin, different religion or may come from another country
- People of different ages
- Lesbian, gay and bisexual people
- A number of other groups of people.

## Recovery-focused

This means supporting people to decide what recovery means for them. And developing their strengths to help them achieve that recovery.

## Social prescribing

This helps connect people to groups and services in the community. It is a way to help them manage their health and wellbeing.

## Talking therapy

This is when someone works with a therapist to talk through the issues they have.

## Trauma

This is any experience that can cause distress or **anxiety**. Trauma can be a one-off event, a number of events. Or it could be an ongoing situation.