



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Closure Report

Together For Mental Health: A Strategy
for Mental Health and Wellbeing in Wales

Talk to Me 2: Suicide and Self Harm
Prevention Strategy for Wales

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Introduction

The **'Together for Mental Health' (T4MH)** cross-governmental strategy, to improve mental health and well-being across all ages was published in October 2012 following significant engagement and formal consultation with stakeholders. Through its lifetime it was supported by a number of delivery plans, the **final** being published in response to the Covid 19 pandemic in October 2020.

Its sister strategy, **'Talk to Me 2'** (T2M2) published in 2015 set out the strategic aims and objectives to prevent and reduce suicide and self-harm in Wales over the period 2015 – 2020, with a mid-point **review** of its implementation in 2018 . Delivery of the objectives for this strategy were to be achieved through actions both with the action plan for T2M2 and specific actions within the delivery plans for T4MH.

T4MH set out a number of high-level outcomes aimed at achieving a significant improvement to both the quality and accessibility of mental health services for all ages. The strategy also recognised that the causes and effects of poor mental health are complex, challenging and multi-faceted and therefore required an integrated, cross-government and cross-sector partnership approach if we were to achieve these outcomes. The six high level outcomes underpinning the 10-year strategy were:

- The mental health and well-being of the whole population is improved.
- The impact of mental health problems and/or mental illness is better recognised and reduced.
- Inequalities, stigma and discrimination are reduced.
- Individuals have a better experience of the support and treatment they receive and feel in control of decisions.
- Improved quality and access to preventative measures and early intervention to promote recovery.

- Improved values, attitudes and skills of those supporting individuals of all ages with mental health problems.

T2M2 had the overarching aim to reduce the suicide and self-harm rates within the general population in Wales. It also had the aim of promoting, co-ordinating and supporting plans and programmes for the prevention of suicidal behaviours and self-harm nationally, regionally and at a local level. To achieve these aims it set out six key strategic objectives:

- Further improve awareness, knowledge and understanding of suicide and self-harm amongst the public, individuals who frequently come in to contact with people at risk of suicide and self-harm and professionals in Wales.
- To deliver appropriate responses to personal crises, early intervention and management of suicide and self-harm.
- Information and support for those bereaved or affected by suicide and self-harm.
- Support the media in responsible reporting and portrayal of suicide and suicidal behaviour.
- Reduce access to the means of suicide.
- Continue to promote and support learning, information and monitoring systems and research to improve our understanding of suicide and self-harm in Wales and guide action.

In March 2023, we published an [independent review](#) of the two strategies, which was undertaken by Opinion Research Services (ORS) between October 2021 and August 2022. The review primarily aimed to assess the extent to which observed outcomes are attributable to the two strategies, this has informed the development of the two successor strategies and their accompanying delivery plans, ‘[Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025 to 2035](#)’ and ‘[Understanding: The Suicide Prevention and Self-harm Strategy for Wales 2025 to 2035](#)’ published in April 2025.

As part of these delivery plans for 2025 – 2028 we committed to publishing this closure report within the first year. This is a brief summary of key activity that has taken place against the outcomes and objectives, with a focus on work that has been undertaken since the publication of the revised T4MH Delivery Plan 2019 – 2022 in 2020 and the [midpoint review](#) of T2MT in 2018.

Together for Mental Health

The independent [Review of Together for Mental Health and Talk to Me 2 Strategies](#) evaluated the strategies and made a number of key recommendations to inform the development of the successor strategies. This review focused on the main strategy outcomes of T4MH, and the extent of progress made towards meeting these outcomes through stakeholder engagement, and a documentation and data review. The review found positive widespread support and progress towards meeting the strategy outcomes.

This closure report focuses on the final delivery plan updated during the covid pandemic. As well as including an additional theme focusing on recovery support in response to the pandemic it updated and added further actions within the original five overarching themes of:

- Reducing health inequalities, promoting equity of access and supporting the Welsh Language.
- Strengthening co-production and supporting carers.
- Developing a workforce plan in partnership with Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) and Social Care Wales (SCW) to work with the third sector, local authorities and the NHS to support medium and longer-term service improvements and to ensure a stable and sustainable mental health workforce.
- Implementing the core data set to improve consistency, robustness and the focus on outcomes across all-age mental health services.
- Supporting the legislative context – making changes needed to implement known legal reform to the Mental Capacity Act 1983 and developing a strategic response to which changes to the Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010 and the Mental Health Act are needed to deliver and drive our/the plan’s policy intentions and outcomes.

Six priority areas for action:

- Improving mental health and well-being and reducing inequalities – through a focus on strengthening protective factors.
- Improving access to support for the emotional and mental well-being of children and young people – improving access and ensuring sustainable improvements to timeliness of interventions, as well as supporting the new curriculum and whole school approach, extending the reach of NHS services into schools and filling gaps in services within both primary and secondary care through Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).
- Further improvements to crisis and out-of-hours provision for children, working age and older adults – moving to a common, multiagency offer across Wales.
- Improving the access, quality and range of psychological therapies for children, working age and older adults – to deliver a significant reduction in waiting times by the end of this Government, to increase the range of therapies offered and to support the workforce – ultimately improving service user experience.
- Improving access and quality of perinatal mental health services – further development of perinatal mental health services in line with quality standards and care pathways and the provision of in-patient care.

- Improving quality and service transformation – including a focus on improvements to areas such as eating disorders support, people in contact with the criminal justice system and co-occurring mental health and substance misuse issues. Positive change will also

be achieved by responding to Healthcare Inspectorate Wales/Care Inspectorate Wales thematic reviews, reviews by NHS Delivery Unit and receiving assurance that recommendations have been delivered.

COVID-19 Mental Health and Wellbeing Recovery Support

The pandemic saw unprecedented levels of demand and activity for mental health services and in 2020 a revised delivery plan for 2019 – 2022 was produced. This included specific actions to respond to the impact of COVID-19 to ensure that people in Wales had access to appropriate mental health support.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, health boards were supported to adapt their services to meet changing individual needs and ensure continued access to essential mental health services. An All-age Mental Health Incident Group was set up, along with regular meetings with key mental health stakeholders, to identify service pressures and sharing of best practice.

In 2021/22 we provided an additional £42 million for mental health support which was aligned to our Programme for Government commitment to continue to prioritise investment in mental health services. As demand across mental health and wellbeing services increased, the government secured an additional £50 million in funding for 2021/22 and another £25 million in 2022/23.

This funding supported front line NHS mental health services and expanded access to early intervention (tier 0/1) support through third sector agencies without GP referrals. The funding also supported work across the system, such as primary prevention in public health, education, social services, substance misuse and other protective factors such as support for people to stay in employment.

In 2021/22, £1.4 million was allocated to health boards to directly commission third sector services and this funding became a permanent part of their allocation from 2023/24. Additional investments have supported initiatives like crisis alternatives (e.g., sanctuaries), with future plans focusing on national-level commissioning where specific needs are identified.

We expanded the capacity of the bilingual [CALL Mental Health Helpline](#), which provides confidential 24/7 support. We have also worked to ensure that resources are available in over 20 languages, with Language Line used for those not speaking Welsh or English.

CALL connects with other helplines like DAN 24/7 (for drug and alcohol support) and the Wales Dementia Line, which supports carers and families. Services are promoted through GP surgery screens, social media, radio, and government communications (e.g., on cost of living or flooding events).

To meet increased demand during the pandemic we also launched a national pilot of SilverCloud in 2021. This is a free online therapy service for people with mild to moderate mental health needs. It combines self-help tools with professional support. This pilot has been continued.

Reducing health inequalities, promoting equity of access and supporting the Welsh Language

These actions supported ongoing improvements and aims to provide equity of access to services with a focus on vulnerable groups, and to enable services to offer a Welsh Language choice.

There has been a focus on embedding equity, accessibility, and support for the Welsh language across the mental health system. Central to this is the [More than just words](#) plan, which promotes the Active Offer, ensuring individuals receive services in Welsh without needing to ask. The plan focuses on building the confidence and skills of the current and future workforce to use Welsh in health and social care settings, supported by the National Centre for Learning Welsh. A new Advisory Board has been established to monitor progress and strengthen partnerships.

Additionally, we supported the implementation of the [All-Wales Standard for Accessible Communication and Information for People with Sensory Loss](#) guides Health Boards and Trusts in meeting the communication needs of people with sensory loss, with implementation monitored in collaboration with organisations such as RNIB Cymru, RNID, and the British Deaf Association.

To continue to reduce health inequalities and promote equitable access we have drawn on key reports including the [Welsh Health Equity Status Report \(2021\)](#) and the Health and Social Care Committee's [Connecting the Dots](#) report to inform the development of successor arrangements to T4MH.

We have also included commitments to increase access to mental health services within the [Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan](#), supported by the Ethnic Minorities Mental Health Task and Finish Group, co-chaired with Diverse Cymru and the Wales Alliance for Mental Health. As part of this work we continued to support cultural competency training and the Refugee's, Sanctuary Seekers and Migrants' workstream developed to improve access to high-quality mental health support for forced migrants who have experienced traumatic events, through [Traumatic Stress Wales](#).

In February 2023 this Government published its [LGBTQ+ Action Plan](#). This recognised that those within the community are more likely to have poorer mental health including loneliness, depression, and suicide, and included actions to ensure the development of the new mental health strategy took account of LGBTQ+ people. It also included actions for the recovery response to COVID-19 to consider the experiences of LGBTQ+ people, particularly on mental health.

The Government has enhanced services for veterans through increased funding to Veterans NHS Wales (VNHSW) and the launch of a [veteran-friendly GP practice accreditation scheme](#) in partnership with Health Education and Improvement Wales.

Strengthening co-production and supporting carers

These actions set out how we aim to supported people with lived experience, carers and the third sector to play a role in shaping, delivering and evaluating services, through better links with local, regional and national networks.

The [Wales Mental Health and Wellbeing Forum](#), established under T4MH has provided a platform for adult service users and carers to influence mental health policy both locally through Local Partnership Boards and nationally via the National Partnership Board. Supported by Practice Solutions, the Forum has played a central role in shaping engagement practices.

In response to this final delivery plans call for stronger co-production, the Forum was commissioned to develop a National Guidance document outlining best practice standards for engagement and co-production. These standards will be required to be embedded across all mental health policies and strategies, forming a core part of the new

strategy. Additionally, we have included plans to enhance engagement with the third sector as part of the new strategy.

Support for unpaid carers has been strengthened through the Welsh Government’s [Strategy for Unpaid Carers](#), published in March 2021, followed by a coproduced [delivery plan](#) in November 2021 with the Ministerial Advisory Group on Carers. A [Carers’ Charter](#), detailing carers’ legal rights under the [Social Services and Wellbeing \(Wales\) Act 2014](#), was published in 2022 and updated in 2023.

In April 2022, the Deputy Minister for Social Services announced a £9 million Short Breaks Fund over three years, aimed at expanding respite opportunities for carers. This initiative, delivered in partnership with Carers Trust Wales and third sector organisations, supports a key Programme for Government commitment to improve the wellbeing of unpaid carers across Wales.

Workforce

These actions set out how we have taken a strategic approach to workforce planning to ensure that it is sustainable for the future and that the mental health workforce is supported to deliver compassionate and high-quality care.

In November 2022, Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) and Social Care Wales (SCW) published a [Strategic Mental Health Workforce Plan](#), commissioned by the Welsh Government to address workforce challenges across health and social care. The plan focuses on building skills and capacity to support prevention, early intervention, and care for individuals with severe mental health needs. It outlines 33 key actions across 7 themes, supported by an implementation plan and a joint implementation group.

The Welsh Government committed over £6 million in 2023/24 to support the plan’s rollout, with continued funding planned. Early successes include expanded university placements in psychology, occupational therapy, and mental health nursing, and the launch of recruitment campaigns such as [Train Work Live](#) and [Careersville](#) to attract professionals into the sector.

To further strengthen the workforce, staff have been trained in foundation-level therapeutic interventions, and others are receiving postgraduate training aligned with [Matrics Cymru](#). A new e-learning platform, Y Ty Dysgu, has also been launched to provide accessible training and resources for staff across health, social care, education, and the voluntary

sector, with initial programmes including CAMHS and Perinatal training. Progress on the plan is being tracked, with an initial [progress report](#)

published in March 2024, and regular updates available on the HEIW Strategic Mental Health Workforce Plan [page](#).

Research, data and outcomes

Work is continuing to strengthen mental health data and is being taken forward in several areas and crucially as new services are developed. The [111 press 2 service](#) (rolled out in 2023) collects detailed data, including pre- and post-assessment distress levels and outcomes, and monthly updates are available on the NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee website.

A wide range of mental health data is already published and cover the Mental Health Measure, CAMHS and adult waiting times, admissions, and section 135/136 detentions, with ongoing work to consolidate this into a single platform, an initial national dashboard that brought together all current mental health data currently published on StatsWales in one space from a wide variety of data sources is now available. This will expand over time and include nationally collected patient experience measures, supported by training that has already delivered to over 80% of mental health and learning disability teams, to embed patient-reported outcome and experience measures into daily practice. It is recognised that establishing a full dataset is complex and we are prioritising specific data

items at each stage to ensure that any data collected is robust and fit for purpose and this will continue into the next strategy.

Several strategic initiatives have also shaped the future of mental health services. Learning from the [Healthier Wales Transformation Fund](#) and [Integrated Care Fund](#) has informed the [Regional Integration Fund \(2022 – 2027\)](#), which includes a focus on emotional health and well-being.

The Welsh Government has partnered with Cardiff University to establish the [Wolfson Centre for Young People’s Mental Health](#), dedicated to reducing anxiety and depression in youth. The National Collaborative Commissioning Unit (NCCU) has also conducted annual **UK and international benchmarking reviews** to understand evolving service demands, especially post-pandemic. Additionally, a [National Framework for Social Prescribing](#) was launched in December 2023, supported by a [Competence Framework for Social Prescribing Practitioners](#) in Wales, developed by HEIW, to ensure consistent and high-quality delivery across services.

Legislation

These actions set out how we implemented the legal changes to be made by the **Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act 2019** and to develop a strategic position of what changes to the **Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010** and the **Mental Health Act 1983** were needed to support implementation of policy intentions and outcomes.

The Welsh Government initially supported the UK Government’s proposed reform of the Mental Health Act 1983, with exceptions such as **Care and Treatment Plans**, which are already legislated for in Wales. Welsh officials worked closely with UK counterparts to ensure the legislation would be suitable for Wales. However, in late 2023, the UK Government announced it would not proceed with the reforms during the current term.

In response, the Welsh Government supported the introduction of the **Mental Health Standards of Care (Wales) Bill**, a Member Bill proposed by James Evans MS. A consultation on the Bill concluded in March 2024, and Welsh Government worked with the Member to explore how the legislation can support improvements in mental health care and patient experience.

Subsequently, the new UK Government announced its intention to legislate; and the Mental Health Bill was introduced in the House of Lords on 6 November 2024. By the end of April 2025, it had been through its Report stage in Parliament and was ready to move to the Commons for further scrutiny.

The policy objectives for this legislation are to modernise mental health legislation to give patients greater choice, autonomy, enhanced rights and support; and ensure everyone is treated with dignity and respect throughout treatment. The Bill also includes measures to improve the care and support of people with a learning disability and autistic people, reducing reliance on hospital-based care. These principles align overall with Welsh Government policy objectives and the legislation is supported by Welsh Government.

The majority of clauses of the Bill are in areas in relation to which legislative consent is required from the Senedd. A Legislative Consent Memorandum was therefore laid in the Senedd, followed by two supplementary LCMs up to March 2025 as amendments were made to the Bill in Parliament.

This Bill was allocated to the Health and Social Care Committee and to the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee within the Senedd for consideration. The Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing appeared before the H&SC Committee on 6 February 2025 and subsequently exchanged correspondence with the LJCC, answering its questions on the Bill. Following a brief consultation with key stakeholders, the H&SC Committee published its report on 3 April and the LJCC on 4 April.

Work to implement recommendations from the Duty to Review of the Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010, originally published in 2015, was paused due to the pandemic and alignment with UK reform proposals. This work has now resumed and will be integrated into the successor mental health strategy, alongside the work to bring forward the Mental Health Act reform.

Following the UK Government's decision not to implement the **Liberty Protection Safeguards** under the Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act 2019, Welsh Ministers issued a Written Statement that confirmed we continued to develop a programme to strengthen the existing **Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)** and enhance protections for individuals lacking mental capacity in absence of the legislative change, this has included additional funding to support the implementation of DOLs recognising that there has been increased demand.

Priority 1: To improve mental health and well-being and reduce inequalities through a focus on strengthening protective factors

The aims of this priority has been to ensure that people would be able to access activities that helped them to stay well and to develop positive relationships. They looked at ensuring the community promoted positive mental wellbeing and encouraged talking about mental health.

To do this, actions within this priority focused on four areas; to tackle stigma and discrimination, to strengthen protective factors, to improve and promote mental health and resilience, and to prevent suicide and self-harm.

Tackling stigma and discrimination

In 2012 [Time to Change Wales](#) was launched to end stigma and discrimination around mental health. This has continued to develop with 187 organisations pledged by the end of Phase 3 in 2022. The 666 Employee and 117 Community Champions who undertook training helped to deliver “Talking is a Lifeline”, which has been the flagship campaign to encourage men to talk about their mental health.

With Ethnic Minorities and Youth Support Team Wales (EYST), TtCW worked to gain a deeper understanding of mental health stigma through the lens of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people and led to the development of Phase 4. Additional funding of £1.4 million has been provided to carry on the work through Phase 4 (2022 – 2025) with a particular focus on working with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities and employers in areas of poverty and deprivation.

Strengthening protective factors

Between 2019 and 2022 the [Out of Work Peer Mentoring Service](#) has supported 10,500 individuals recovering from mental ill-health or substance misuse. Of these, 94% were recovering from mental

ill-health, with 2,500 gaining qualifications, 1,150 completing work experience, and 1,000 entering employment. An [evaluation](#) of the service which also considered the impact of the Covid pandemic on the service was published in February 2023.

In addition to this the **In-Work Support Service** also supported 2,650 people between 2019 and 2022 to remain in work who were absent or at risk of becoming absent from work due to mental ill-health. This was followed by an [evaluation](#) of the performance and perceived impact of the service published in March 2023.

Following on from the success of both of these projects the Welsh Government announced funding for successor services. £13 million was announced to support people recovering from mental ill-health and/or substance misuse through the Out of Work Peer Mentoring Service. In June 2023 £8 million was announced for a new In-Work Support Service that extended the support to all of Wales after the initial scheme running in North and South West Wales only.

Public Health Wales has continued to disseminate evidence-based advice and tools through [Healthy Working Wales](#). This is a national programme that has supported healthier workplaces for over 15 years. In June 2023, the programme [announced](#) a transition to a digitally led, flexible model to better meet the needs of employers and employees.

The [Economic Contract](#) refreshed in 2021 ensures it continues to evolve to reflect policy priorities. This included supporting businesses across Wales that we work with to take positive actions to mitigate and address mental health concerns in their workforce in return for support from Welsh Government as part of our values-based recovery. Following this, in 2023

the Welsh Government published [Economic mission: priorities for a stronger economy](#) which included delivering the provision of mental health and wellbeing support to overcome barriers which hold young people back from accessing employment and education opportunities.

In May 2021 the Welsh Government committed to providing a [Young Person's Guarantee \(YPG\)](#) in Wales. This is an ambitious programme that aims to provide young people under 25 in Wales with the support they need to gain a place in education or training, or to get into work or self-employment. In January 2024 a Rapid Evidence Review was [published](#) to contribute to the evidence base underpinning the YPG.

We know that loneliness and isolation can affect a person's mental health and wellbeing and in 2020 the all age [Connected Communities Strategy](#) was published. This has been supported by a loneliness and social isolation fund established in September 2021. This has been followed with an [evaluability assessment](#) that has shown that there is scope for process, impact and economic evaluation of the strategy and its associated programmes.

It is important to support people with long-term conditions, and this was highlighted in the delivery plan. Work has been undertaken through the [National Clinical Framework](#) published in 2021, setting out the wider strategic approach to delivering high quality health care services. This has been supported by Quality Statements published throughout this time, with a commitment to publish the Mental Health Quality Statement in the first year of the new strategy.

The homes in which we live, and the insecurity and stresses of homelessness can have significant impact on our mental health. The Welsh Government has focused on actions to tackle homelessness publishing [Ending homelessness in Wales: a high-level action plan 2021 to 2026](#) in 2021 with a progress

[report](#) published in August 2023. Supporting this action plan the [Rapid Rehousing Transition Guidance for Local Authorities](#) was published in 2022 to help those who experience homelessness find settled housing faster. Published in 2024 a [Homelessness Outcomes Framework](#) has been developed to identify long term outcomes for ending homelessness in Wales using data to track progress and inform policy development.

Building on the [White Paper on ending homelessness in Wales](#) in October 2023 and following consultation the [Homelessness and Social Housing Allocation \(Wales\) Bill](#) was laid before the Senedd in May 2025. It sets out how we will transform our approach to homelessness and to achieve the long-term ambition to end it.

In October 2023 the Welsh [Housing Quality Standard](#) was published, to improve the quality of social homes in Wales recognising the benefit that quality and culturally suitable homes will have on both physical and mental wellbeing for all. Within the private rental sector mental health awareness training is now part of the mandatory training for private landlords and management agents to renew their licences through [Rent Smart Wales](#).

Across the lifetime of this delivery plan we have seen a significant impact on peoples lives and mental health and wellbeing due to the strains of the costs of living. The [actions](#) that have been put in place to support people and families through the cost of living crisis have needed to be mindful of mental health and to take a trauma-informed approach which supporting individuals.

Our rural communities have continued to be supported through the [Farm Support Group](#), bringing farming charities together to share knowledge and expertise to provide coordinated mental health support within the agriculture sector.

Improving and promoting mental health and resilience

In 2021 PHW facilitated the launch of [Hapus](#), a social movement model to hold a national conversation about mental wellbeing, to better understand what it means to be well. With its partners Hapus encourages people to prioritise their mental wellbeing, inspiring them to act and focus on the things that matter to them.

We have remained committed to helping all children in Wales to have the best start in life and to reach their potential. In March 2021 the findings of the [Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACE\)](#) review was published. Its findings were supportive of the existing ACE policies whilst finding there was a need to shift focus from awareness raising to actions which prevent or mitigate the impact of ACEs and to recognise the existence and impact of other sources of childhood adversity and the relationship between these and ACEs and how both contribute to poorer health and wellbeing across the life course. This includes through supporting the development of trauma-informed practices, services and systems.

Across government we have continued to work to support the development and embedding of trauma-informed practices, in line with the good practice principles, and practice levels, set out in the [Trauma Informed Wales Framework](#). We have provided additional funding to Traumatic Stress Wales, and ACE Hub Wales, to enable them to support the implementation of the Framework, including the development of additional training, e.g., Trauma-informed Practice, Skills & Strategies for (those working with) Children and Young People – (TIPSS-4CYP) developed by Traumatic Stress Wales, and resources. This supports those working with asylum seekers, refugees and migrants, and those with substance misuse needs.

Preventing Suicide and Self-Harm

An update on the actions relating to preventing suicide and self-harm in the revised T4MH Delivery Plan 2019 – 2022, is provided as part of the summary of key achievements made since the midpoint review of Talk to Me 2 in 2018.

Priority 2: Improving access to support for the emotional and mental well-being of children and young people

The actions within this priority focused on supporting children and young people to develop their abilities to cope better with everyday challenges. They also helped teachers and others to recognise when more support was needed and how it could be accessed, and to ensure there was access to specialist support.

Improving access to mental health support in educational settings

The emotional and mental wellbeing of learners has been a key priority for the Welsh Government and a Joint Ministerial Task and Finish Group was convened on

a Whole School (now Whole System) Approach to Emotional and Mental Wellbeing. This group developed the [Framework guidance](#), statutory for maintained schools and local authorities, to support schools and partners in meeting the wellbeing of the school community. It supports schools in reviewing learner and staff wellbeing and to put in place plans to address gaps and build on their strengths.

In 2021/22 the Welsh Government committed funding to support projects that align with the whole school approach. They include, extending counselling services beyond the core funding within the RSG, teacher training on well-being for pupils, supporting school staff's own well-being, and resource to support implementation of the Framework and undertake related evaluation activity.

The whole-school approach and [NYTH/NEST frameworks](#) are complimentary guidance to support the mental health and emotional wellbeing of children and young people across education, health and social care settings. Alignment of the core values has ensured that implementation of the appropriate framework within their specific area ensure a *whole system approach* to children and young people's mental health and wellbeing.

There has also been a focus on further education where over £10 million has been allocated since 2020 to support mental health and wellbeing of staff and learners. In May 2024 the Minister for Education and Welsh Language [announced](#) an additional £4 million for further education mental health and wellbeing support. This was to increase the capacity of welfare teams in all further education colleges in Wales, building on the previous initials of counselling support, early intervention training, recruitments of staff to encourage outdoor activities and projects with mental health charities.

We have allocated funding, via HEFCW, to support delivery of higher-education institutions' health and well-being strategies, activities and implementation plans. Additionally, HEFCW requires universities to use the [UUK Stepchange self-assessment toolkit](#). The UUK self-assessment tool was developed to encourage universities to plan and implement a whole university approach, as set out in Stepchange: mentally healthy universities.

Improving access to support in the community for children and young people

Following the Children and Young People's Education Committee's [Mind Over Matter report](#) (2018) and [Mind Over Matter report](#) (2020), and the Children's Commissioner for Wales' [No Wrong Door](#) (2020) the Nyth/Nest Framework has been co-produced to facilitate the cultural shift called for. It has been developed as a planning tool for use by the Regional Planning Boards (RPBs) and wider partners in creating a whole system approach to mental health and wellbeing services for babies, children, young people and their families.

The implementation of the NYTH/NEST framework to support children's mental health and wellbeing has been key for the delivery of our commitment to prioritise service redesign to improve prevention, tackle stigma and promote a 'No Wrong Door' approach to integrated mental health support. In October 2022, the NYTH/NEST framework moved into Welsh Government for its implementation phase with all RPBs having NYTH/NEST leads who co-ordinate their implementation plans and provide annual progress reporting.

As a result of the [Welsh Government / Plaid Cymru Co-operation Agreement](#) (commitment 43), funding was secured to pilot health board led projects to extend mental health provision for children and young people experiencing a mental health or wellbeing crisis with clear referral pathways into NHS services if required.

These models have included Hywel Dda University Health Board establishing alternative to admission and hospital/discharge lounge provisions for children and young people, providing a 24/7 bespoke service. Other health boards have all put in place a service such as Aneurin Bevan University Health Board who have established a discharge lounge/safe space to

assess children and young people presenting in crisis. The children and young people accessing this CAMHS discharge lounge/Sanctuary Hub are supported by BOOST (Bolstering Our Outreach Scope and Therapy) support workers offering individual therapeutic work with children and young people experiencing psychological and emotional distress and provide home based ‘wrap around’ support in times of crisis.

Improving Children and Young People’s Mental Health Services

Wider investment in emotional mental health and well-being has supported a whole system approach from early intervention through to specialist services. This has ensured that everyone, including babies, children and young people, as well as their parents and carers, can access support when needed.

In March 2021, the Welsh Government issued the framework [embedding a whole-school approach to emotional and mental well-being](#) providing direction to address the emotional and mental wellbeing needs of all children and young people, as well as school staff. This framework has been supported and complimented with the Nyth/Nest framework to provide guidance to support the mental health and emotional wellbeing of children and young people in all settings including health and social care.

In order to support organisations to work with CAMHS in creating a whole system approach to mental health and wellbeing services for babies, children and young people we co-produced NYTH/NEST and children’s rights training and [a self-assessment and implementation](#) published in February 2024.

Schools counselling has been important to the wellbeing of many children and young people who have needed it and Local authorities in Wales are required to make reasonable provision of independent counselling services

for children and young people aged between 11 and 18 on the site of each secondary school that it maintains and for pupils in Year 6 of primary school. Welsh Government has provided significant funding for this service which, in the latest [published data](#) supports almost 14,000 pupils per year, and ensures our local authorities have the resources to deliver universal and targeted wellbeing interventions, and training for teachers and other school staff.

Bringing together the whole-system we have supported the development of the CAMHS schools in-reach service across all-Wales following successful [pilots and evaluations](#). The programme has built the capacity (including skills, knowledge and confidence) in primary and secondary schools to support mental health and wellbeing of pupils and staff. It has also improved the access of schools to specialist liaison, consultancy, advice and training when needed.

In some cases, our children and young people need to be supported by our CAMHS and the transition between this service and adult services can be challenging as the young person navigates between them. Much work has been carried out including [the Review of evidence on all-age mental health services](#) in June 2020 leading to the [Transition and Handover Guidance](#) in February 2022 to support these young people. We have continued to develop this work and commissioned TGP Cymru to research the experiences of young people transitioning between services with a [report](#) published in May 2022. The NHS Performance and Improvement are now leading a programme of work to support health boards to improve transitions and together with a monitoring framework, health boards and the Welsh Government can gauge progress and, where necessary identify any further interventions that maybe necessary for sustained improvements in this important area.

Priority 3: Further improvements to crisis and out of hours for children, working age and older adults

The aim of this priority has been to improve access to support those in times of distress and for the people who support them to have the knowledge and training to do so. To be able to do this the actions within this priority focused on strengthening partnership working.

Strengthening partnership working

Since 2021/22 Welsh Government have committed £6 million annually to improve the NHS crisis services. This funding has supported the implementation of 111 press 2 for mental health and wider service developments. All Health Board areas are delivering a 24/7 model for crisis care and work is underway on developing a national protocol/framework for Sanctuary services across Wales.

Most new funding for crisis care services, or preventative services has been allocated by Welsh Government to Health Boards, and we expect a range of partner organisations that are represented on regional crisis care forums to have a strong influence on what local services are funded.

In May 2019 the Welsh Government, through the National Crisis Care Concordat Group, commissioned the Director Of Quality & Mental Health/Learning Disabilities at the NHS Wales National Collaborative Commissioning Unit to undertake a National Review ([Beyond the Call \(2020\)](#)) to achieve greater understanding of the issues leading the public to access emergency services when experiencing mental health and/or welfare concerns.

As a response to this review, 111 press 2 was piloted. Following successful pilots this service has now been made available to everyone in Wales. This gives access to urgent mental health support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The service provides rapid access to advice, assessment and de-escalation from a specially trained mental health practitioner, over the phone. Where required, individuals can be seamlessly referred into specialist mental health services or to self-help support.

Priority 4: Improving the access, quality and range of psychological for therapies children, working age and older adults

The actions in this priority ensured that appropriate and evidence based psychological therapies were accessible and available in a timely manner, and for people to be involved in the decisions being made about their care.

Improving the access, quality and range of psychological therapies

We understand that people will have different needs and will not always require intensive treatment and care that is why we have strengthened low level support,

for instance through the introduction of online Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (SilverCloud, launched in 2021). In 2022 we [announced](#) an additional £7.7 million in funding to continue to provide SilverCloud Wales for a further three years.

The Welsh Government has also continued to work and support the bilingual, all-ages, [Reading Well Books Scheme](#) in all 22 library authorities across Wales. The books have been made available to borrow from libraries, and selected titles are also available to borrow as

e-books and audiobooks. Reading Well books are all recommended by health experts, as well as people with lived experience of the conditions and topics covered and their relatives and carers.

People can visit their local library website to find out how to join the library and access books electronically.

Psychological therapies refer to a wide range of talking treatments which explore the psychological difficulties that impact upon a person's emotional, mental and sometimes physical wellbeing and offer support in overcoming those difficulties.

The National Psychological Therapies Management Committee produced '[Matrics Cymru-Guidance for Delivering Evidence-Based Psychological Therapy in Wales](#)' in 2017 and an associated implementation plan in 2018. In 2020, [Matrics Plant, Guidance on the Delivery of Psychological Interventions for Children and Young People in Wales](#), was published, followed by a Matrics Plant implementation guide published in 2021. These documents are designed to support health boards deliver evidence based psychological interventions and is by evidence tables which describe the most helpful and effective psychological interventions for specific mental health problems as well as those that can be used more generally.

Improvement Cymru also published [good practice guidelines](#) to improve access to and the provision of psychological interventions to people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities in Wales.

As we move into the next strategy we are now working with HEIW and the NHS to continue to develop the infrastructure to support health boards to improve access to psychological therapies.

For those that have been affected by traumatic events in their lives and at risk of developing or with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), or complex post-traumatic stress disorder (CPTSD) we have funded (£1.2 million annually) [Traumatic Stress Wales](#). Since its inception in April 2020, Traumatic Stress Wales has established itself as a successful national quality improvement initiative that is co-produced, co-owned and co-delivered by all relevant stakeholders, including people with lived experience of PTSD and CPTSD.

A priority for Traumatic Stress Wales has been to increase the dissemination of evidence-based specialist interventions to prevent and treat PTSD and CPTSD. Traumatic Stress Wales has now trained over 150 clinicians in Wales to deliver psychological therapies for PTSD that are recommended by Matrics Cymru and Matrics Plant. Working in collaboration with the National Centre for Mental Health, Traumatic Stress Wales has been implementing the Spring Programme, an evidence-based guided digital self-help intervention, within NHS Wales. Piloted in 2024, new guided digital self-help interventions are being developed for children and young people with PTSD, adults with prolonged grief disorder, and adults CPTSD and military veterans with PTSD.

Priority 5: Improving access and quality to perinatal mental health services

This priority and its actions focused on ensuring that support would be made available during and after pregnancy. It ensured that if more specialist support was needed then that would be made available closer to home.

Improving access and quality of perinatal mental health services

As part of funding for mental health, the Welsh Government has continued to provide funding to specialist perinatal mental health services.

There are now services in every Health Board and over £3m of mental health service improvement funding is supporting these services annually.

The Health Boards have been provided funding to support compliance with the Royal College of Psychiatrist's Community Standards for Perinatal Mental Health Services and Health Boards have made good progress towards these standards, supported by the national Perinatal Clinical Lead. As part of the programme to improve and develop our community services, the Clinical Lead and the Perinatal Mental Health Network have developed a [pathway of care](#). The aim of the pathways is to standardise practice and to

reflect a preventative, earlier intervention and evidence-based approach. A [Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Curricular Framework](#) was also published to support staff. In April 2021, a Mother and Baby Unit within the Swansea Bay University Health Board area was opened, improving the experience of new mothers as they are able to get the specialist support, they need for themselves and their babies closer to home. We know that this is too far to be an appropriate service for those living in North Wales and we have continued to work with NHS England to develop a joint unit in Chester to further support ease of access from North Wales and this work will be carried forward into the next strategy.

Priority 6: Improving Quality and Service Transformation

Ensuring that services would continue to improve and would be responsive to an individuals' needs was the focus of the actions within this priority. Actions focused on supporting access to appropriate mental health support for all ages as well as improving support in specific conditions and services.

Supporting access to appropriate mental health support for children, young people, working age adults and older adults

In partnership, the Royal College of Psychiatrists Wales and NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee (JCC) are working jointly on a suite of priority projects, through the [Dyfodol](#) (Futures) programme, which was commissioned by Welsh Government

The programme offers several workstreams to both respond to challenges and opportunities across the health service, but also to model and design future services and pathways. This is achieved through an evidence-based, and informed approach, and through research collaborations with partners.

Primary care plays a key role in delivering mental health support. Since 2018, an ambitious primary care contract reform programme has been underway in Wales with four overarching priorities: to improve access to and from primary care, to focus on quality and prevention, to bring together key partners through clusters to plan and deliver services; and to strengthen the primary care workforce. This work is supported by the [Strategic Programme for Primary Care](#). Increasing the level of service provided in the community is key to delivering many of the objectives of A Healthier Wales, particularly around prevention. The contract reform programme is driving contractual changes which will continue to further these ambitions.

Improving support for eating disorders

In 2018 we published the independent [review](#) of Eating Disorder Services in Wales and Health Boards have continued to provide high standards of treatment and support. Services have continued to improve and the then Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing [updated](#) the Senedd in January 2024 on how

health boards have used additional funding as well as future actions being led by NHS Performance and Improvement.

With targeted funding our Health Boards have adapted and expanded services and recruited additional staff to respond to increases in demand. All health boards have made progress in working towards achieving the NICE standards for eating disorders services, earlier intervention and to ensure no one is waiting longer than 4 weeks for an assessment. Through the development of the service specifications we are strengthening our ability to more robustly monitor progress in meeting the standards we expect from health boards.

In 2022/23, recognising the priority and additional needs of our eating disorder services we again provided additional targeted service improvement funding of £2.5 million. It has been for each health board to identify their local needs and to determine how this additional funding was used together with their mental health budgets to improve the eating disorder services in their area.

Specialist CAMHS community eating disorder teams across Wales are now providing multidisciplinary assessment and treatment for children and young people. Support includes individual, group, and family therapy, dietetic support, and risk management. With increased investment from Welsh Government, the specialist community adult eating disorder services have recruited new staff and developed multi-disciplinary specialist services. This has enabled easier access for people with eating disorders to specialist services in the community.

Improving support for people with co-occurring mental health and substance misuse issues

Providing appropriate, integrated support for co-occurring substance misuse and mental health have been clearly identified as priorities within both the Substance Misuse Delivery Plan 2019 – 2022 and this Delivery Plan. A Substance

Misuse/Mental Health Deep Dive Group was established to focus on removing barriers faced by people in housing need (including the homeless) prisoners and ex-offenders with co-occurring substance misuse and mental health issues who are seeking to access support. Out complex needs funding for Area Planning Boards (APBs) to support this agenda was doubled in 2022/23 to £2 million, increased to £3.5 million in 2023/24 and in 2024/25 stood at £4.5 million. The Deep Dive work also included a focus on working with practitioners to increase awareness of legal powers to safeguard dependent drinkers and effective use of the additional complex needs funding for a range of evidence-based interventions. These meetings have also provided the opportunity for closer partnership working with key national activity, such as the Adverse Childhood Experiences Hub in Public Health Wales and Traumatic Stress Wales, who work with the group on co-occurring issues.

Improving Early Intervention in Psychosis Services

We commissioned Public Health Wales to support health boards to deliver practice against the [National Clinical Audit of Psychosis standards for EIP services](#). This included supporting the regional teams to develop and enhance EIP services by facilitating the National Steering Group, Community of Practice and specific regional work programmes. Work undertaken by the team has included promoting the use of outcome tools, physical health assessment and intervention, and adventure therapy to support resilience

Improving support for people in contact with the criminal justice system

People in the criminal justice system with mental health problems have an equal right to treatment and support and we know that the vast majority of those within the prison system have a diagnosable mental health and/or substance misuse problem.

The Welsh Government is currently updating the [Partnership Agreement for Prison Health](#), a collaborative agreement between Welsh Government, HMPPS, Health Boards and Public Health Wales, to reflect the work taken forward since its publication in **2019**. The Partnership Agreement is based on taking forward a “whole prison approach” to improving health and well-being – recognising that it is not just about providing access to clinical healthcare and treatment.

In 2022, Welsh Government consulted on draft Standards for Mental Health Services (developed collaboratively with the Royal College of Psychiatrists) and a draft Substance Misuse Treatment Framework (developed collaboratively with Public Health Wales). This work will inform work being taken forward in the next plan, with implementation being supported by initial baseline assessments with the prisons (to be undertaken by CCQI and the Royal College of Psychiatrists).

The Health, Social Care and Sport Committee’s Report on health and social care in the prison estate was [published](#) in March 2021. The Welsh Government responded in [August 2021](#), with an updated response then published in [September 2022](#).

Talk to Me 2

This closure report focuses on the key achievements made since the midpoint review of Talk to Me 2 in 2018.

A National Suicide and Self-Harm Programme Lead for Wales has been appointed, with Regional Leads to drive national and local partnership action. Through this, we have established local partnerships with the aim of preventing and supporting the response to suicide and self-harm.

This [national programme of work](#) is accessible via a digital platform for suicide and self-harm prevention and support. This includes a [Training Hub](#) for anyone looking for training and development opportunities that can help them, their communities, or their workforce, to develop their awareness, understanding and skills in relation to the management and prevention of suicide and self-harm.

In 2019, we published “[Responding to issues of self-harm and thoughts of suicide in young people: Guidance for teachers, professionals, volunteers and youth services](#)”. The guidance provides information for adults who work with children and young people regarding how to respond to issues of suicide and self-harm. It addresses how to ask questions to children and young people who may have suicidal feelings or be self-harming, and how to respond to disclosure of these feelings and behaviours. It provides guidance on confidentiality, safeguarding and routes of escalation.

In 2022, we established a Cross-Government Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Strategic Group. It has since been reshaped and renamed to form the Suicide Prevention and Self-harm Strategy Board. The Group has been established to drive forward cross-Government and multi-sectoral work to improve prevention and the response to suicide and self-harm in Wales.

In the same year, we also launched [Real Time Suspected Suicide Surveillance \(RTSSS\)](#) in Wales which was developed in partnership with Public Health Wales, the four police forces in Wales and the British Transport Police, and the NHS Wales Executive (now NHS Performance and Improvement). The RTSSS collects data directly from police forces relating to sudden or unexplained deaths that are suspected to have been by suicide.

We have published guidance entitled “[Responding to people bereaved, exposed or affected by suicide](#)”. The guidance was informed by insights into the needs and experiences of people living with bereavement by suicide in Wales. The guidance aims to ensure services provide a more compassionate response.

We have also commissioned a [National Advisory and Liaison Service](#) for those impacted by deaths that might be a suicide. This provides a single point of contact for people across Wales who have been affected by a death by suicide and can be used as a key touch point, and by a wide range of agencies, to signpost people to support.

The digitisation of the nationally recognised Help is at Hand Cymru resource also enables its continual improvement as a resource for healthcare and other front-line workers to help people who have been affected by suicide or unexplained deaths.

Wider improvements to mental health support through the delivery of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy will continue to contribute to our efforts to reduce the prevalence of suicide and self-harm in Wales.

Key, and most relevant service transformation includes the establishment of single points of contact for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), the newly developed Sanctuary spaces for Children and Young People in emotional and mental health crisis, intended as an alternative to turning up at emergency departments, and the all-age national rollout of 111 press option 2 for vital and more accessible support.

Also, our Joint Ministerial Whole System Approach aims to improve the emotional wellbeing of our young people.

Within the education system and under the umbrella of the Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Wellbeing Framework there has been significantly extended support for all learners within schools via the local authority statutory schools counselling provision and roll out of the CAMHS School in-reach advice service, ensuring help and support for the wellbeing and mental health needs of learners, teachers and the wider school community.

The independent [Review of Together for Mental Health and Talk to Me 2 Strategies](#) stated that any successor strategies should be ambitious; be co-produced with those with lived experience; have proper governance structures and accountability in place; be adequately and sustainably funded; addressing workforce training, skills, capacity, and support gaps; include regular reviews and measurable priorities and objectives that can be revised in line with qualitative and quantitative outcome data.

These areas also came through in the feedback on the consultation for the draft Suicide Prevention and Self-harm Strategy, with a strong theme on the need for greater detail and accountability so that we can more effectively drive and monitor progress.

Conclusion and Next Steps

This report has provided a high-level summary of the actions we have taken across Government since 2020. Throughout this report we have highlighted work that is now being taken forward under the new 2025 to 2035 strategies.

The [Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025 to 2035](#) and [Suicide Prevention and Self-harm Strategy 2025 to 2035](#), and the accompanying Delivery Plans ([MHWBS](#) and [SPSHS](#)) set out the new governance arrangements which will help create more structure and accountability. The current Delivery Plans, covering the first three years of the new ten-year strategies, have been developed with specific actions designed to drive progress towards delivering each of the four vision statements or six strategic objectives. Each of the actions have and identified lead and timescale.

We have also published an accompanying [Theory of Change](#) and an [Outcomes Framework](#) using a structured approach to measure and demonstrate the impact of the suicide prevention and self-harm strategy by identifying and tracking specific, measurable outcomes. This will enable us to monitor and assess progress and understand what works, what doesn't, and what we need to do to achieve our desired results. These will also be published for the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy by the end of the first year of its delivery plan.

To maintain accountability and assurance that mental health and suicide prevention remain a priority we will now provide publicly available annual updates against the new strategies with the first in 2026.