

Our plan to have a strong health and social care workforce for mental health services



This document was written by the **Social Care Wales** and **Health Education and Improvement Wales**. It is an easy read version of 'A strategic mental health workforce plan for health and social care'.

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How to use this document



This is an easy read document. But 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 32**.

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Introduction



We wrote this plan to have a strong mental health workforce that can meet the needs of the people of Wales.



To provide health and social care services in Wales, we need to make sure:

- We have enough staff.



- Our staff have the right training and skills.

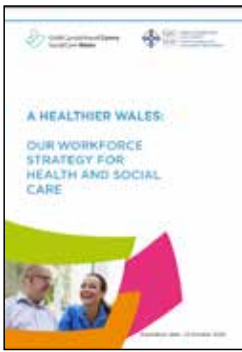


- We have staff from **diverse** backgrounds.

Diverse means people are different. They have different skills, beliefs, backgrounds and values.



- Our staff feel valued.



In 2020 we wrote a plan called [The Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care](#).



It sets out what we will do to make sure we have enough people with the right skills for **all** health and social care services.



In 2012 Welsh Government wrote a 10-year plan to improve mental health and **well-being**. It was called [Together for Mental Health](#).



Well-being means a person is happy, healthy and is comfortable with their life and what they do.



These 2 plans showed us that we need to write this plan. This plan is to make sure we have enough staff for **mental health services**.



It is important that we look at all health and social care jobs and services. As well as ones specific to mental health.



There are many staff in different services who will deal with people with mental health problems.

This includes staff working in:



- Health
- Social Care
- Youth work



- Education
- Housing



- Police
- Fire and Rescue



So it is important that this plan thinks about all of these job roles. And how they can work together to support people's mental health.



This plan includes 33 actions to make sure **all** staff have a better understanding of mental health problems.



And how we can provide support early to stop problems getting worse.

Aim



The aim of this plan is to have a mental health workforce that can meet the needs of the people of Wales. Now and in the future.

The aim is to:



- Deliver the best support for people. As close to home as possible.



- Have staff with the right:
 - values
 - behaviours
 - knowledge
 - and skills



- Make sure we have enough staff to provide the best services that meet people's needs.



- Have staff that are **diverse** and represent the people of Wales, the Welsh language and our **culture**.

Culture means our shared ideas and traditions, and things like our history and arts.



- And make sure our staff feel valued and are valued.

How we wrote this plan



Because this plan covers such a wide number of services and staff, it was important to work on it with others.



We have done **a lot** of work to make sure we hear from:

- People who receive mental health services
- People who provide mental health services
- Employers
- Colleges and training providers
- Trade unions
- Volunteers
- Unpaid carers
- Government



We did a lot of research. Looked at what our workforce was like now. And looked at what mental health services will need to be like in the future.



We used what we heard from people to write actions for this plan.



Then we asked people to check these actions and give us their views to make them even better.



We ended up with 33 actions.



The actions are important to **everyone** that has a role in providing mental health services.



We feel strongly about working with our partners in health, voluntary, education and social care on these actions.

The 33 actions will help us to meet our aims under **7 important areas of work:**



1. The right number of staff with the right level of skill.



2. Our workforce is involved, motivated and healthy.



3. Make opportunities to promote and improve careers in health and social care.

4. Working well with different staff in different services.



5. Using technology to support our work.

6. Have good education and learning opportunities.



7. Good leadership

We have identified 3 important things we need to think about in all this work:



- 1. Well-being.** We want our mental health workforce to be happy, healthy, and supported. This is better for staff and for the people using services.



- 2. Welsh language.** When people can use services in the language of their choice, it leads to better outcomes.



- 3. Inclusion.** This means everyone can take part, and everyone has a fair chance.

What are the challenges we need to think about



There are lots of things we need to think about when planning our mental health workforce.



We must work with partners to develop a strong workforce.



We need to think about young people in school choosing careers. Right up to how and when our staff will retire.

Here are the challenges we need to think about when planning a workforce for mental health services:



- The person must be at the centre of everything we do.



- We need to support staff from different services to learn together. And work in the same ways.



- We need to make careers in mental health better. People have to want to work in mental health.



- We need to make sure the wider workforce understands mental health issues. From youth workers to social workers, to physical health staff.



- Almost half of our mental health staff do not feel valued or supported.



- Almost half of the people we heard from said mental health is not a popular career choice.



- A lot of people said it was difficult to understand how services work.



- We must use technology to help deliver services. We must make sure staff have the skills they need to use technology.



- Leaders and managers must be caring and look after the **well-being** of staff.



- We must plan carefully for our mental health workforce. We need the time and **resource** to do this.

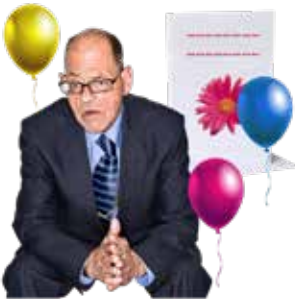
Resources are useful things we have or things we own. For example buildings, vehicles, information, money and staff.



- The number of people working in health and social care is increasing. It is not increasing as much in mental health roles.



- Our workforce is getting older.



- People in mental health jobs retire earlier.



- We need to think about how we deal with less staff now. As well as plan for the future.



- We need to think about how long it takes to train people to do certain jobs.



- The needs of people with mental health problems are changing. People are getting older. And more people will experience mental health problems.



- What people want from their careers and their daily lives in work is changing.



- We must be able to provide services in the Welsh language.



- Some important policies and laws are changing. And we must think about this.



- We must make sure that mental health is taken as seriously as physical health.



- We must make sure our workforce is fair, equal and includes everyone.



- The health and social care workforce is the biggest workforce in Wales. Most of the workforce are female. There are over 350 job roles.

What we plan to do to achieve our goals



The 33 actions in this document will help us meet the 7 important areas of work.



They will help us deal with the challenges listed on pages 14 to 18. To make sure we have the mental health workforce we need now and in the future.



Have the right number of staff with the right level of skill

We will:



1. Have more people in education and training for mental health nursing, psychiatry, psychology, and other jobs.



2. We will look at how we think our needs might change in the future, and say what mental health staff we will need for the next 10 years.



3. Improve what we know about the mental health workforce to help us plan for the future.



4. Check what tools and **resources** we have for planning. Make sure they are good enough to help mental health services plan the staff they will need to meet future needs.



5. Make sure there are enough trained mental health staff that can deal with legal issues. This includes staff that can do **Mental Health Act** assessments and support people with the [Liberty Protection Safeguards](#).



6. Do work to look at how volunteers can support us in mental health services.



7. Find a way to get more **Allied Health Professional** support in mental health services. **Allied Health Professionals** are staff like art therapists, occupational therapists, and dietitians. They are professionals who can support a person's health and **well-being**.

Our workforce is involved, motivated and healthy

We will:



8. Do a mental health workforce survey in both health and social care. To find out how our staff are feeling in their job and in work.



9. Set up a national support service for our mental health workforce. Working in mental health services can impact staff. The service will give staff support and guidance.



10. Select, train, and support a group of mentors. A mentor is a person who guides someone with less experience. Mentors will support staff personally and professionally.



11. Improve supervision for staff. Supervision is when staff sit down with their manager to chat about how work is going and what support is needed.



12. Support our managers to develop their knowledge and skills. So they can better support our workforce and respond to change.

Make opportunities to promote and improve careers in health and social care

We will:



13. Create a campaign to promote careers in mental health services. This will be supported by 2 existing campaigns: [Train Work Live](#) and [We Care Wales](#).



14. Use the [Careersville](#) website to promote careers in mental health. This will offer resources, information and live events.



15. Improve career pathways in mental health by following the recommendations in the Centre for Mental Health's [Future of the mental health workforce report](#).



16. Create guides and tools to help managers improve work-life balance of staff. This could include things like flexible working hours, working from home and being more flexible with retirement options.

Working well with different staff in different services

We will:



17. Create and deliver mental health training for the whole health and care workforce. The training will be delivered online. There will be a basic course that **all** staff **must** do.



18. Create a guide for using some new roles in mental health teams. For example, **physician associates** and **clinical associates in applied psychology**. These new roles will help us provide more, and better services.



19. Start a project to collect the views and experiences of people with mental health problems. To better understand our work from their point of view.



20. Make sure community health teams and primary care teams are able to support mental health services. Do this through things like new job roles and job descriptions.

Using technology to support our work



21. Check how we use technology in mental health services at the moment, and what level of skills our staff have. Use the [National Digital Capability Framework](#) to help us train staff.



22. Create **digital champions**. These are people who will support the use of technology throughout health and social care.

Have good education and learning opportunities

We will:



23. Work with partners on education and training for psychiatrists. It has been hard to get psychiatrists for a long time. We need to make the training more flexible.



24. Check the quality of plans for mental health education and training programmes. We want to make sure mental health training programmes are the best they can be.



25. Look into how we can change social work training so more social workers specialise in mental health.



26. Work with royal colleges and professional bodies to make sure there is mental health training opportunities across different types of jobs in health and social care.



27. Work with partners to create education and training plans for most important mental health areas. And specialist areas.



28. Create a fund for staff education that they can do when they are qualified.



29. Provide national learning programmes so staff keep learning and developing skills throughout their career.



30. Create a plan for mental health support worker education. This would set standards for support workers and help them go to university if they wanted to, to study health and social care.

Good leadership

We will:



31. Develop a system for supporting senior professionals and managers to be good leaders. This will help make sure our leaders are prepared and have the right skills to support our workforce.



32. Focus on supporting leaders in mental health services. Mental health services provide different challenges for staff compared with other health services. We need leaders that can support mental health staff properly.



33. Start a mental health leaders' network on Gwella. Gwella is a website for leaders. This will help mental health leaders learn from each other and share **resources**.

Hard Words

Culture

Culture means our shared ideas and traditions, and things like our history and arts.

Diverse

Diverse means people are different. They have different skills, beliefs, backgrounds and values.

Resources

Resources are useful things we have or things we own. For example buildings, vehicles, information, money and staff.

Well-being

Well-being means a person is happy, healthy and is comfortable with their life and what they do.