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 Welsh Ambulance Services
 WHS Trust

Our Mental Health and Dementia Plan 2021 - 2024



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This document is available in Welsh

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Introduction

With over 30,000 contacts per year to 999 alone, the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST) responds to more mental health crisis calls than any other NHS or public sector organisation. In addition to this, mental health demand in 111/NHS Direct Wales and the Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service (NEPTS) is significant.

Dementia continues to be one of the 21st century biggest healthcare challenges. We are working towards improving the experience for people living with dementia who use our services, as well as considering the impact it will have on our workforce.

This plan outlines how WAST will improve our response to people with mental health conditions and dementia between 2021-2024. This plan has been developed following continued engagement and consultation across WAST services and external stakeholders eg Hafal/Wales Alliance for Mental Health, as well as service users and carers. Within it, we set out our high level objectives and more detailed plans for improving mental health and dementia services for people across Wales of all ages who call 111 or 999.

WAST is hugely grateful to Welsh Government for their ongoing investment in improving our responses to people in mental health crisis and those affected by dementia.

Emergency Medical Services Non-Emergency Patient Transport Services Clinical Contact Centres NHS 111 Wales

WAST in summary

Our vision

This plan has been developed in partnership with WAST staff, Trade Union Partners, individuals accessing services, carers and with the third sector.

Ultimately, we aim to:

- be an organisation that responds appropriately to both the clinical and emotional needs of people living with mental health conditions and dementia, their carers and families
- have a skilled and effective workforce delivering better quality services with kindness and compassion, better service user experience and outcomes
- ensure that we have parity between physical and mental health, and to improve health outcomes for people of all ages with mental health conditions or dementia
- develop our partnerships, engagement and evaluation processes to ensure that we deliver high quality, informed and equitable care to Wales

Foreword by the Chief Executive - Jason Killens

Our new Mental Health and Dementia Plan could not have come at a more important time.

We know that demand for mental health services is growing across the whole of Wales, and that supporting people with dementia to live well is one of the biggest challenges of the 21st Century. On top of all of this, the global Covid-19 pandemic has had significant and long-lasting impacts on the wellbeing of the people of Wales. Quite simply, the NHS, social care,



the voluntary sector and other agencies such as the police will have to work even more closely than before if we are to respond well to the challenges ahead.

There can be no doubt of our commitment to this agenda - we have recently established our Mental Health and Dementia Programme Board that steers the delivery of this plan across our services, and seldom does a day go by without us hearing about the experiences of people who use our services, or an internal discussion about how we build on and improve our responses to people in crisis. We are hugely grateful to Welsh Government for their support to develop our Mental Health and Dementia Team, and we are now in discussion with the Emergency Ambulance Services Committee and the Chief Ambulance Services Commissioner about how we move forward with delivery of our Integrated Medium Term Plan and this plan.

I look forward to us working in close partnership across the system, and seeing the changes we make over the next three years.

Jason Killens Chief Executive

Foreword by the Executive Director of Quality, Nursing, Safety and Patient Experience -Claire Roche

We have been on an important improvement journey on mental health and dementia over the last few years. Our ambitions and our plans have grown over time, and we now have some tangible achievements under our belt. These include our fantastic mental health and dementia training offer, our work with Workforce colleagues on employee mental health and being Dementia Friendly Organisation of the Year in 2018 (and finalists in 2019) to name but a few.



Our new plan brings together the views of our staff, evidence and best practice from across the UK and beyond. Of most importance are the views of service users and carers, as well as other stakeholders. It builds on the successes from our earlier mental health and dementia plans, including the development of our Mental Health and Dementia Team, raising the voices of people with lived experience, considerable training activity and our piloting of mental health practitioners in our Clinical Support Desk. All of this work, including working in close partnership with people with lived experience and our staff, will continue and strengthen over the next three years of this plan.

We know that we have a lot of work to do to improve the outcomes and experiences of people who have a mental health condition and/or dementia who contact our services, be it through 111, 999 or our Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service. This plan will set us on course for a step-change in this.

I'm proud of the work WAST has done already in this area, and am really excited to see what the next three years brings.

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Claire Roche Executive Director of Quality & Nursing

Our commitment

Nearly all mental health calls to 999 (and many to 111) are for or from someone in a crisis. Many of these people will have thoughts of suicide or self-harm, and some will have acted on these thoughts. Additionally, a lot of people who call us for physical health issues may also have a mental health condition. For example, people with long-term physical health conditions like rheumatoid arthritis are two to three times more likely to have a mental health condition like depression and anxiety than the rest of the population. Cardiovascular disease and diabetes are also risk factors for the development of mild cognitive impairment, as well as Alzheimer's Disease and vascular dementia. Many callers to 999 will be calling about a physical health issue eg a fall, but may also have dementia or a mental health condition. All of this means that we have to respond appropriately to people in crisis, and also think about mental health and dementia when people call us about physical health issues too. That requires us to work in an integrated way to meet the needs of callers to 111 and 999.

We are setting ourselves some ambitious goals in our mental health and dementia plan. Many of these goals will require us to take a whole system approach, and to commit to working in partnership with other healthcare providers like Local Health Boards (LHBs) and the third sector. Whilst we have consulted with many people with lived experience of dementia, we will do more to hear their voices, and those of people who have mental health conditions as we move towards delivery of this plan.

It will also mean that every part of WAST will need to take action to improve our services for people with mental health conditions and dementia. We collectively agree to ensure that mental health conditions and dementia are treated with parity across all of our services.

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Claire Roche Executive Director of Quality & Nursing

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Rachel Marsh Director of Strategy, Planning and Performance

Andv Havwood Director of Digital Services

Jason Killens Chief Executive

FARTA

Claire Vaughan Executive Director of Workforce & OD

Christopher Turley **Executive Director of Finance** and Corporate Resources

Board Secretary

Keith Cox

Dr. Brendan Lloyd Executive Medical Director / Interim Deputy CEO

Lee Brooks **Director of Operations**

Estelle Hitchon Director of Partnership and Engagement

VULNERABILITY COPING STRESSORS CRISIS Adverse childhood Social connections Debt Distress thoughts of or acts of self-harm or periences **Positive strategies** Housing Mental illness Positive help seeking Relationship breakdown Genetics

Anyone can have a crisis - if your ability to cope is over-topped by more stressors than you can handle

A crisis is a situation where an individual's ability to cope is overwhelmed by a single stressor or multiple stressors such as bereavement, debt, housing issues or other events. Our ability to cope with stressors is shaped by many different things, including biological, psychological and social factors. Some people may be more prone to crisis eg those who experience multiple adversities in early childhood or people with a severe and enduring mental illness.

Crises can be avoided by using positive coping strategies such as selfsoothing, problem solving, connecting with others and help-seeking, or made worse by others including consuming alcohol or non-prescribed drugs, or self-harm.

Some people have built in risk factors for crisis, which could be caused by high levels of stress hormones whilst in the womb or in the first two years of life. Others have higher social vulnerability because of loneliness, isolation, worklessness, or lack of purpose.

However, anyone can end up in a mental health crisis.

Any member of staff who needs help for themselves or a colleague should access our #WASTkeeptalking portal where they can find all of the mental health resources available to you, face to face and online. For more information, the WAST Wellbeing Strategy can be accessed on our staff intranet page.



What is a Mental Health Crisis?

Working towards equity

In Wales and across the UK, some groups experience greater difficulty in accessing health services than others eg people from Welsh speaking communities, people with sensory loss; and some groups have poorer mental health than others eg people from ethnically diverse communities, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ+) people. Indeed, some of these same groups also have poorer outcomes and experiences when they do access healthcare.

Inequalities in Mental Health: **The Facts**

Determinants

There are many determinants in our lives which influence our mental health; from positive prenting and a safe place to live, to experiencing abuse, oppression, discrimination, or growing up in poverty.

Determinants of mental health interact with inequalities in society, putting some people at a far higher risk of poor mental health than others.



People who identify as LGBTQ+ have higher rates of common mental health problems and lower wellbeing than heterosexual people, and the gap is higher for those under 35 and over 55 years of age.



Children and young people with a **learning disability** are **three times** more likely than average to have a **mental health problem** Women are ten times

Men and women from African-

Caribbean communities in the UK have higher rates of post-

traumatic stress disorder and suicide risk and are more likely to be diagnosed with schizophrenia

> as likely as men to have experienced extensive **physical and sexual abuse**

during their lifes: of those who have, **36%** have **attempted suicide**, **22%** have **self-harmed** and **21%** have **been homeless**

Children from the **poorest 20%** of households are **four times**

as likely to have **Serious mental health difficulties** by the age of 11 as those from the wealthiest 20%





Working towards equity (continued)

Our equality strategy "Treating People Fairly" sets out our approach to improving outcomes for all of the people of Wales, and how we will achieve our commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duty. Some key objectives in the strategy are:

Bv 2024...

... we will take action to maximise health opportunities and strengthen the voice of all citizens and staff to ensure the people who use our services have equity of access and improved experience with access to services that are sensitive to the needs of all.

- By 2024....

... we will take action to increase awareness and tackle key equalities issues that may arise from a person's 'protected characteristics' to ensure our services, our culture and our people understand and are responsive to the needs of all.

"Treating People Fairly" includes a specific action to "work in partnership to improve our understanding of the experience of mental health service users, and also of those living with dementia".

Inequality is complex, multi-factorial and entrenched in many ways, and it is only through working together, under the stewardship of our equality strategy, Equality Impact Assessment and Welsh Language Strategy that we will begin to reduce inequality and improve outcomes and experience. Inequality is an important dimension in every key deliverable in this plan.



Emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic

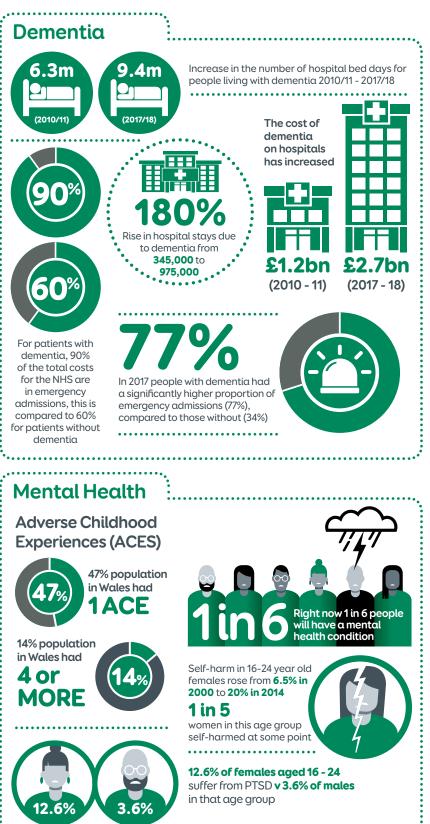
As this plan is published in 2021, Wales is just emerging from its third lockdown of the global Covid-19 pandemic. It is well reported that the pandemic, and the measures taken to combat it, have and will continue to impact on people's mental health for years to come. We have seen a large decrease in people's psychological wellbeing compared to pre-Covid-19 levels. Issues such as social isolation and financial stress, as well as people experiencing major Covid-19 symptoms (and 'long Covid') have all taken a toll on the wellbeing of the people of Wales. During the pandemic, people who already had mental health conditions were more than four times more likely to be distressed compared to those without one. Public Health Wales is anticipating increases in alcohol deaths and in mental health conditions across the board, and expects some of these effects to last for up to a decade.

People affected by dementia have been amongst those hit the hardest by the pandemic. From the high death rate in care homes, to significant cognitive decline in people who live in isolation and the pressures on unpaid carers, the pandemic has had a severe impact. There has been evidence of a surge in loneliness and isolation, and some people have reported a decline in concentrating, memory loss, agitation and stress/ depression.

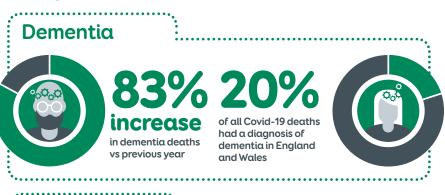
"The biggest benefit was to the patient as they were speaking to a specialist who understood their mental health condition and needs, and then signposted them to the most appropriate pathway"

WAST Clinician on having Mental Health Practitioners supporting during the pandemic, 2020

Pre-pandemic



During Pandemic



Mental Health

The data show high levels of psychological distress during the COVID-19 pandemic, with around 50% of the population reporting clinically significant levels of psychological distress: 50% reporting clinically significant levels of

50% reporting clinically significant levels of psychological distress

ititititit 20%

20% showing "severe" effects

riiiiiiiii 33%

33% younger people reported 'severe' levels of psychological distress

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Psychological distress is also higher in women and those from deprived areas

Post Pandemic



We are now facing a period of considerable uncertainty. The challenging circumstances in the economy will impact on us all. Younger people whose education has been disrupted might experience challenges to their life chances. Growing unemployment will impact on mental health and wellbeing, and isolation will have lasting effects for older people.

Connecting with other work across Wales

This plan is clearly aligned with a number of other NHS Wales and Welsh Government documents and strategies including:

A Healthier Wales

The Welsh Government's long-term plan for health and social services in Wales sets out the vision of a 'whole system approach to health and social care' which is focused on health and wellbeing, and on preventing physical and mental illness. A Healthier Wales' 'Quadruple Aim' is to deliver an inclusive, engaged, sustainable, flexible and responsive workforce in health and social care, which is reflected in this plan.

For further information CLICK HERE

Together for Mental Health

Together for Mental Health (T4MH) is a cross-Government Strategy setting out goals for improving mental health and mental health services in Wales. It is the first Mental Health Strategy that covers all ages; children and young people, adults of working age and older people. In addition to being a plan for all ages T4MH has also adopted a focus on early intervention.

For further information CLICK HERE

The Dementia Action Plan for Wales

The action plan is a result of working with and listening to a wide range of stakeholders. It is ambitious, person-centred and was developed with people living with dementia, their families and carers as equal partners. This is an approach we have adopted throughout our own work in both mental health and dementia.

For further information CLICK HERE

The Crisis Care Concordat for Wales

The Concordat is a shared statement of commitment, endorsed by senior leaders from organisations that are most involved in responding to and supporting people of any age who experience a mental health crisis.. The Concordat sets out the ways in which partner agencies should work together to deliver a high-quality response to this group of people who require assessment and/or intervention. This approach is reflected under the 'partnerships' section of the plan.

For further information CLICK HERE

Connecting with other work across Wales (continued)

Beyond the Call

This report into crisis care in Wales estimated that around 100,000 people end up in a crisis in Wales each year. It recommended that 111 become the first point of contact for people in a crisis, and we are working with Welsh Government and others on implementation of this recommendation (which is included in our delivery plan).

For further information CLICK HERE

Older People's Framework

WAST's Mental Health and Dementia team have been consulted and informed throughout the development of the Older People's Framework to ensure that mental health and particularly dementia are considered.

(Pending publication)

Welsh Language Standards

In line with the Welsh Language Standards and the Welsh Language Measure (2011), we recognise the importance of delivering all parts of the plan in both Welsh and English including but not limited to the plan itself, training and education for staff and engagement with service users who communicate through the medium of Welsh.

For further information CLICK HERE

More Than Just Words

Welsh Government's original strategic framework for Welsh language services in health, social services and social care, launched in 2012, has led to a number of improvements which help ensure Welsh speakers receive health, and social care services in their first language.

For further information CLICK HERE

WAST Digital Strategy

This strategy has been developed to ensure that WAST can deliver on its existing digital ambitions, whilst also creating the environment to embrace digital change and transform our services to deliver excellent patient care.

For further information CLICK HERE

Our Priorities for 2021 - 2024

We have worked together to identify three key priority areas for us to focus on over the next three years of this plan.



People

Improving the skills knowledge and values required in our **people** to support individuals who have a mental health condition or dementia



Practice

Ensuring that people receive best **practice** in the timely and appropriate triage, care, support, advice or information for their mental health condition or dementia



Partnerships

Service users are partners in all of our work and internal and external **partnerships** are consistently built and maintained

Delivery of these three priorities will help us on our journey to delivery of our vision for mental health and dementia in WAST. The next section goes into more detail on these three areas.



"These priorities - people, practice and partnerships will be really positive moving forward"

The Mentor Ring Cardiff and the Vale Representative, 2021

People

Improving the skills, knowledge and values required in our people to support individuals who have a mental health condition or dementia

Objectives	Deliverables
01. People with a mental health, substance misuse or dementia condition receive a capable and compassionate response from the WAST workforce	Continue to build on our existing E-Learning modules - listen to staff needs and evidence from across the UK and build more evidence based, relevant, interesting and accessible modules - in both English and Welsh
	Build podcasts, webinars, seminars and masterclasses for frontline staff on dementia, mental health, crisis care and substance misuse
	Roll out Suicide First Aid (SFA) across the organisation with a priority for frontline staff, with the aim of delivering SFA to at least 50% of the frontline workforce by the end of 2022, and 75% by 2024
	Continue to roll out a range of dementia learning including role specific, e-learning modules with the aim of delivering dementia learning to at least 50% of the workforce by the end of 2022, and 75% by 2024
	Develop tailored training and seminars specific to job role eg emergency medical technicians, paramedics, nurses- to focus on implementation of skills in practice
	Work with the National Ambulance Training College, UK Ambulance Services and others to develop our offer, and to ensure coherence with the rest of training in WAST and beyond
	We will strengthen the requirement for mental health education within university courses, and enable and facilitate our people to undertake post-registration courses in mental health that would strengthen our capability and capacity within our clinical workforce
02. Newly qualified paramedics will enter the workforce skilled and confident in managing mental health conditions and dementia	Continue to work closely with Swansea University on the curriculum and syllabus for the BSc in Paramedic Practice
	Deliver agreed content on the BSc in Paramedic Practice in partnership with Swansea University
03. Nurses, paramedics, social workers, police officers and others will have the opportunity to develop their crisis care practice	Design and delivery of advanced practice module/ programme on crisis mental health care



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Practice

Patients receive person centred, timely and appropriate triage, care, support, advice or information for their mental health or dementia condition or crisis

Objectives	Deliverables
04. People receive timely and appropriate triage/care/advice/ information for their crisis or mental health/dementia condition when they phone 111 or 999	Using our partnership model, we will develop a response model bringing together practice wisdom and the best available evidence that sets out how we will respond to people who call 999 or 111 in a mental health or dementia crisis We will ensure that our workforce reflect the needs of our service users, through recruitment and retention of mental health practitioners with specialist knowledge relevant to our populations eg older people, children and young people, people who misuse substances etc We commit to undertaking case studies each quarter to capture patient experience in order to measure this objective; which will include reviewing the appropriateness and effectiveness of the service provided.
05. We will reduce the conveyance rate to emergency departments of people in mental health and dementia crisis who call 999, ensuring that they are signposted safe and effective alternatives where warranted	We will recruit and train mental health practitioners to deliver high quality 'hear and treat' services to people who call 111 and 999 We will improve out 'hear and treat' outcomes for people who call 999 in a mental health/dementia crisis We will support, clinically supervise, deliver ongoing learning and audit for mental health practitioners working in 'hear and treat' roles Mental health practitioners will work across 111/999 clinical teams to triage/assess the majority of mental health and dementia calls to 999 and 111 We will gather further evidence on the safety/efficacy of mental health practitioners triage/assessment of callers to 999 and 111 in crisis We will establish the volume and acuity of mental health and dementia calls to our services

Practice (continued)		
Objectives	Deliverables	
06. People receive timely and appropriate care/advice/ information for their crisis or mental health or dementia when they are seen by an ambulance crew	We will establish a set of tools for people in 'see and treat' roles to use to assess/triage/support people in crisis We will establish the evidence for a specialist mental health and dementia 'see and treat' service to 999 callers where this would add value	
	We will proactively engage with service users in our training and development work	
	We will increase engagement at and visits to a range of dementia and mental health related groups	
	We will establish the optimal configuration for dementia friendly ambulance environments	
07. People receive timely and appropriate care/advice/ information for their crisis or mental health condition from a mental health practitioners working in a 'see and treat' role	We will pilot the utility, safety and/or efficacy of advanced interventions such as nurse prescribing for people in mental health crisis or who have dementia We will pilot follow-up telephone calls to some callers to 111 and/or 999, where there is evidence that this may improve outcomes and safety eg children and young people We will explore the potential for piloting the Distress Brief Intervention programme with one local authority area, LHB or other footprint We will scope our pathways development work for mental health and dementia	
08. Build on our existing digital offer to people around physical and mental health	We will design and deliver more symptom checkers for mental health and dementia on the NHS Wales 111 website We will redesign and then monitor web visits to NHS Dementia Guide in partnership with colleagues from across WAST and Wales We will review our existing work on crisis prevention app and decide on next steps with Swansea University/ Accelerate Programme We will work in partnership with the Trust's digital leads to develop and maintain appropriate and relevant digital resources for staff and service users including a range of signposting resources which are available across Wales. We will explore how best to develop a mental health and dementia dashboard for WAST, to improve the collection, analysis and distribution of data, which will inform all of our work.	



Older Person's Dementia Group Representative, 2021 Group Representative, 2020

Partnerships

Individuals who use our service, blue light partners and relevant private and third sector organisations (including social care) are partners in all of our work and mental health and dementia is on a par with physical health in WAST



Objectives	Deliverables
09. Maintain and build upon our visibility at national mental health and dementia forums, and links with other national frameworks	We will continue to reliably attend key mental health and dementia forums and influence stakeholders, including the National Mental Health Network Board (and sub-groups) the Dementia National Group, the National Crisis Care Concordat, Together for Mental Health Partnership Board amongst others We will take proactive steps to influence our Public Health Plan including work on risk reduction and Making Every Contact Count We will work with Welsh Government and National Collaborative Commissioning Unit to design a National Mental Health Conveyancing Service for Wales
10. Maintain and build upon our visibility at LHB-level mental health and dementia forums	We will support operational leaders to attend LHB or regional meetings with data, advice and briefing to ensure that they feel well supported on the mental health or dementia agenda and can share issues for advice We will ensure that the dementia team have effective relationships with relevant partnerships by attending relevant forums and network meetings
11. Involve service users and carers in our work	We will endeavour to co-deliver training with service users where this will add value We will support continuous engagement with relevant networks through the Patient Experience and Community Involvement (PECI) team We will ensure that the patient voice is strong through storytelling and sharing patient, carer and family experiences We will work collaboratively with the PECI team to maximise benefits of the Trust's community network
12. Involve blue light partners and relevant third sector organisations in our work	We will work in partnership with police forces, to share data, analysis and raise/listen to any concerns and work towards solutions We will build our relationships with mental health triage teams in all police forces, and work towards a network of mental health /dementia telephone triage providers We will work with the PECI team to support continuous engagement with third sector representatives

Partnerships (continued)		
Objectives	Deliverables	
13. Work towards parity between physical and mental health across all WAST services	We will work with all parts of WAST to ensure that mental health and dementia are included in their Integrated Medium Term Plan (IMTP) commitments	
14. Ensure staff voices are heard in our work	We will engage well with Trade Union Partners and staff across WAST to ensure they can influence our work and we hear their views through the mental health steering group	
	We will develop a communications and engagement plan in partnership with the communications team	
	We will work towards staff from all parts of the organisation being represented in our work and well versed on developments	
	We will work with the WAST Innovation and Improvement Network to deliver or support Quality Improvement projects	
	We will explore the potential for each directorate to have a mental health and dementia advocate to ensure that mental health and dementia are embedded in our agendas	
15. Work with partners to develop mobile urgent care services as an integral part of the wider urgent and emergency care system	We will develop a specialist mental health 'see and treat' offer for consideration by commissioners	

"We are sending people to hospital who probably don't need to go, and we know that may not be the best place for people with mental health problems"

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WAST Clinician on further training for Mental Health and Dementia, 2020

How we will work

There are seven key enablers which will help us to achieve our long term vision. These include:

- Building our dashboard Collecting and publishing valuable and appropriate data, analysis and insights that help to change practice
- Being visible Contributing to forums across WAST and Wales
- Leading our agenda We will provide exceptional clinical leadership on this agenda to the organisation
- Quality Improvement
 We will use QI methodology to deliver improvement projects
- Project management We will continue to build on Agile DSDM to ensure that we deliver projects on time
- Collaboration We will work in partnership across WAST and Wales to make things better for the public
- Co-production
 We will do nothing about people without them





Governance

This plan is complex and requires us to work together. Delivery of this plan will be overseen by our Mental Health and Dementia Programme Board, and our key priorities for mental health and dementia are set out in the Trust's IMTP.

We also have a Mental Health and Dementia Steering Group which provides a forum for staff to contribute to the development of our plan and projects.

Delivery and progress is also reported to the Quality Steering Group, and the Quality and Patient Experience Committee of the Trust Board, as well as to both commissioners and Welsh Government.

We are excited to work with individuals who use our service, our broad range of partners and our workforce to achieve the outcomes set out in this plan, and ultimately, improve the experiences of everyone accessing and using our services.

We hope that you are as excited about this plan, and its potential to deliver improvement for the people of Wales, as we are. If you would like to join in the discussion with us, or if you would like more information, then please email the Mental Health & Dementia Team at: AMB_MentalHealth@wales.nhs.uk



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Connecting with other work across Wales

A Healthier Wales
A healthier Wales: long term plan for health and social care | GOV.WALES

Together for Mental Health
Together for mental health: our mental health strategy | GOV.WALES

The Dementia Action Plan for Wales https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-04/dementia-action-planfor-wales.pdf

The Crisis Care Concordat for Wales wales-crisis-care-concordat-national-action-plan-2019-2022.pdf (gov.wales)

Beyond the Call

https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-12/beyond-the-call.pdf

Older People's Framework (Pending publication)

Welsh Language Standards FOI release: Welsh Language Standards | GOV.WALES

More Than Just Words More than just words (wales.nhs.uk)

WAST Digital Strategy 261120-WAST Digital Strategy-Final.pdf (wales.nhs.uk)



Mental Health and Dementia Plan 2021 - 2024 MAY 2021