

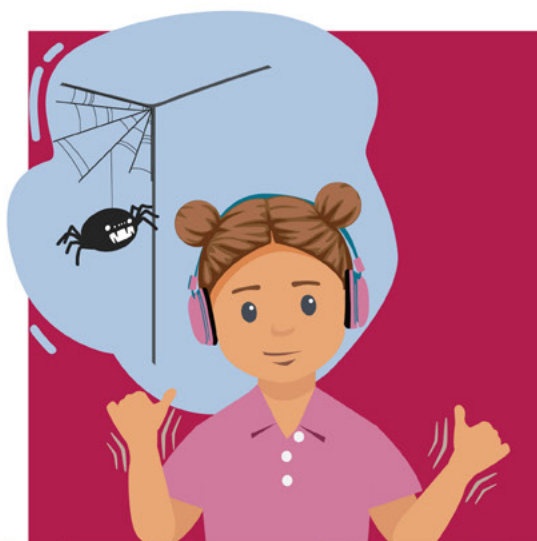
Report on

# All-Age Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy Consultation

Making sure people in Wales live in communities that promote and support mental health and wellbeing.

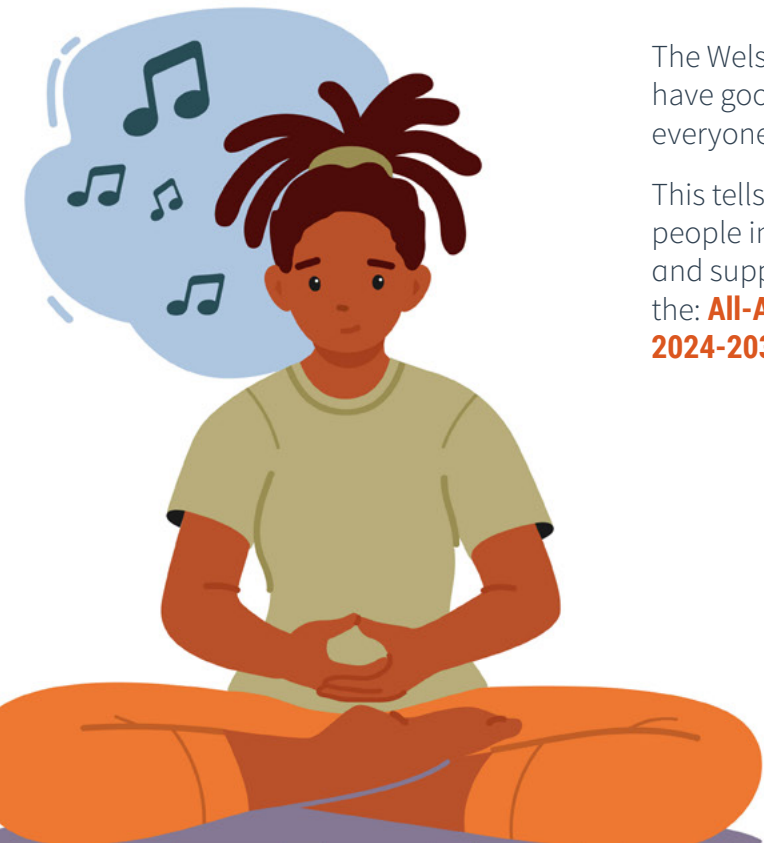


Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



## Mental health and wellbeing are important – they're just as important as your physical health.

Our mental health plays a big part in the way we think, feel and act. It affects:



The Welsh Government wants everyone in Wales to have good mental health and wellbeing. We want everyone to have the right support, at the right time.

This tells you about our new plan to make sure people in Wales live in communities that promote and support mental health and wellbeing. It's called the: **All-Age Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024-2034.**

**In February to June 2024 we ran a consultation to find out what people think.**



**This report tells you what they said.**

### **This strategy is based on rights**

All children and young people have rights set out in the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**. This strategy helps make sure everyone has their right:

- to be supported to live and grow (Article 6)
- to be listened to and taken seriously (Article 12)
- to good quality health care (Article 24).

# About the consultation



There were **260**

responses from the online consultation.



NHS Wales and Mental Health Service and Carer Forum ran events and involved staff across Wales.

We involved **405**



children and young people aged between 4 and 25.



Lots of people supported this strategy.

Responses from adults came from:



## Main things people said at the workshops:

The strategy needs to be clear and easy for everyone to understand.

It needs to include social care more.

We need to include service users and carers when making decisions and action plans.

Some areas will find delivering this strategy more difficult than others.

There was support that the strategy focused on helping people with serious mental illness, but we need to make sure everyone gets the support they need.

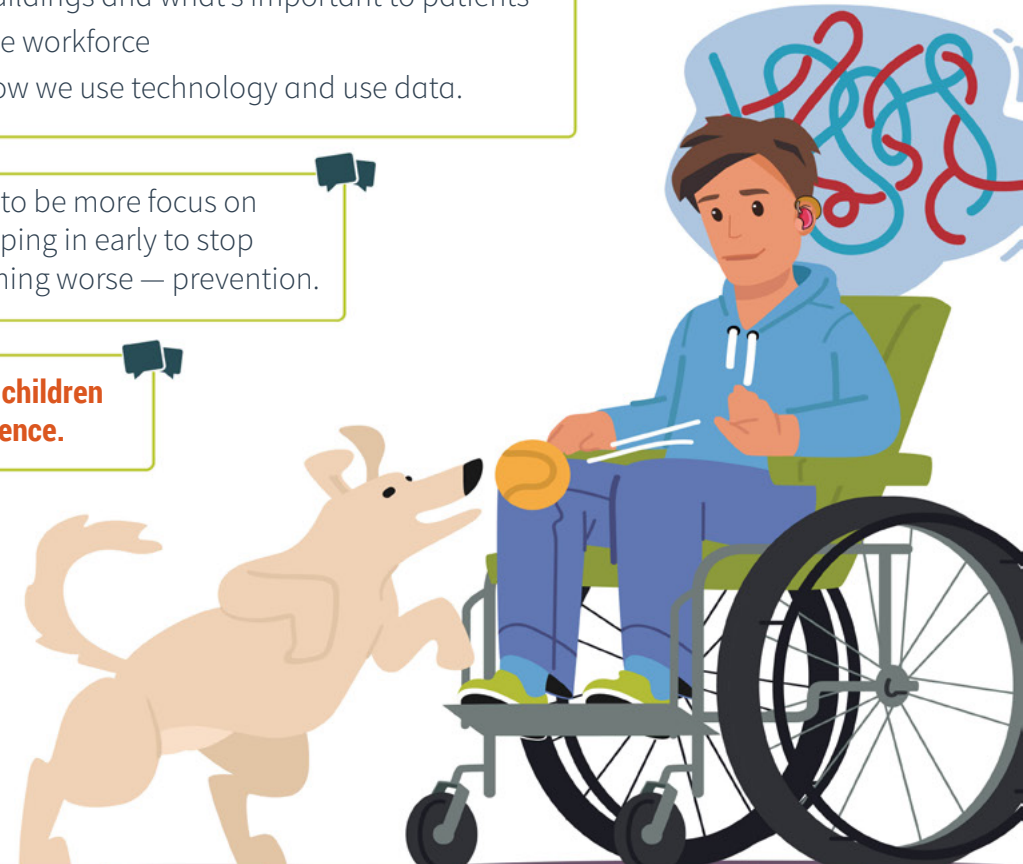
Services need to give people clear information on what they can expect.

There was support to focus on:

- improving buildings and what's important to patients
- improving the workforce
- improving how we use technology and use data.

There needs to be more focus on services stepping in early to stop issues becoming worse — prevention.

**Supporting young children makes a big difference.**



# 1 We asked people what they thought of the vision...

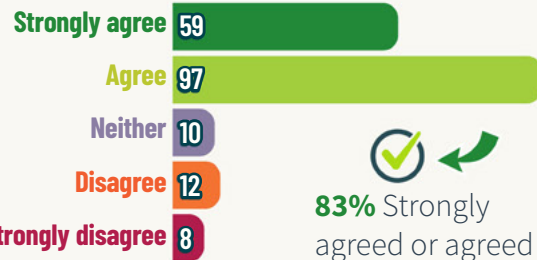
## Our vision

People in Wales live in communities that:

- promote and support mental health and wellbeing
- give them the power to improve their mental health and wellbeing
- are free from stigma and discrimination.

**f Stigma** – when people view you negatively and judge you because of your mental health.  
**Discrimination** – when people treat you differently because of who you are.

### 186 responses:



### People said:

They support the vision – it's strong and ambitious.

The vision needs to be clear and easy for everyone to understand.

It needs to be clear about what we were trying to do. This needs to have more details.

This is too long and wordy.

It's important we include everyone and listen to them.

We needed to include other things in the vision:

- early years, community support, and services stepping in early to support people
- how it would help high risk groups like young people, people with disabilities, people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.

This could be challenging to achieve.



Children and young people said we should include schools and education more, as they're a big part of this.



## 2 We asked people what they thought of the 10 principles...

- Support is based around your rights.
- Support is for all ages.
- Support puts people and their needs first.
- Support helps to promote equity of access, experiences and outcomes: it's open, fair and there's no discrimination.
- Support works together and has 'No wrong door'. It connects together and is open to everyone.
- Support is delivered by a skilled workforce.
- Support looks at everything that affects mental health.
- Support understands trauma.
- Support is based on evidence and focuses on outcomes.
- Support steps in quickly

**i** **Trauma** — is any experience that is unpleasant and can cause us distress or anxiety. Trauma can also refer to the effects of a traumatic event. Trauma can be a one-off event, a series of events, or an ongoing situation.

### People said:

The 10 principles are good and are good standards.

The principles need to be clear and easy to understand.

It was good the strategy is for all ages. It makes sure everyone gets support, but it's important no age group misses out on support, including children and young people.

It should be clear this strategy includes pregnancy and the early years.

There should be separate strategy for children and young people.

The 'No wrong door' principle is important.

Other principles should include:


- Different groups — learning disabilities, farming and rural communities.
- Listening and involving people — babies, children and young people and people with a lived experience of mental health issues.
- Funding — how it should be used.
- Prevention — stepping in early to support people so issues don't get worse.



Children and young people said we need to focus on including them in decisions and developing plans for this strategy.

### 180 responses:



 **85%** Strongly agreed or agreed with the 10 principles.

# 3 We asked people what they thought of vision statement 1...

## Vision statement 1:

We want people to have the knowledge, confidence and opportunities to protect and improve their mental health and wellbeing.

### Actions

#### We will:

- 1 ➔ Build our knowledge so we understand the best ways to promote and protect mental health and wellbeing.
- 2 ➔ Build on the advice we have and communicate information better.
- 3 ➔ Start a national conversation to find out what helps people manage their mental health and wellbeing and share it to encourage others to take positive steps.
- 4 ➔ Stop stigma so people can get support without feeling judged.
- 5 ➔ Make sure staff have the skills to understand mental health and wellbeing so they can look after their own mental health and wellbeing and help people in the right ways.
- 6 ➔ Support the development of social prescribing which connects people to local community support that can help them manage their health and wellbeing.
- 7 ➔ Make sure people know about the support and activities, including community groups, online support and more.
- 8 ➔ Work with organisations to reduce the barriers that stop people taking part in activities like culture, heritage, leisure, sports and more.
- 9 ➔ Make sure people understand that mental health needs protecting from birth and throughout all of life.

### 184 responses:



**72.5%** Strongly agreed or agreed with what we're going to do to reach this.



# What people said about vision statement 1...

It's good this includes community-based support. But there's pressure on communities and some places need to be more accessible.

Organisations play a big part in supporting people.

People need opportunities but things like costs, transport, communication and language can be barriers.

A "National Conversation" would raise awareness and help reduce stigma.

This needs to focus on inequalities caused by things like the cost of living, poverty, and housing.

It's important everyone can get support, not just certain groups.

It's important to listen to people, they understand the barriers people face.

It's good this includes babies, and children but it needs to include pregnancy too.

Reducing stigma will help make sure people feel able to ask for support.

Making sure people know what promotes good mental health should be part of this:


- physical activity
- a balanced diet
- feeling connected to community life, school, work
- supportive friendships and relationships
- activities like sport, arts and crafts, walking and enjoying nature.

The actions need more details so people understand what will happen better.

There needs to be more understanding and respect for different cultures and how to meet their needs.

People who work in services need to know how to support their own mental health and wellbeing.

More information should be available online.

 Young people said they're concerned over a lack of places to 'hang out' with their friends, and a lack of clubs, youth clubs and facilities for sport and activities. Play and time with friends (both in person and online) is vital for mental health and wellbeing.



# 4 We asked people what they thought of vision statement 2...



## Vision statement 2:

We want all Government departments and services to work together.

### Actions

#### We will:

- 1 ➡ Make sure services and organisations in Wales follow this strategy and carry out the right assessments so they give people the right support.
- 2 ➡ Keep this strategy up to date with other laws and policies across Wales.
- 3 ➡ Measure the difference this strategy is making to people's mental health and wellbeing. This will help us learn what works and improve.
- 4 ➡ Make sure all services and organisations that work with babies, children and young people put their mental health first and follow the [NYTH / NEST Framework](#).
- 5 ➡ Find and share examples of good practice in care and treatment planning that put people first and look at everything that could affect someone's mental health and wellbeing.



**79%** Strongly agreed or agreed with what we're going to do to reach this.

### 181 responses:





# What people said about vision statement 2...

There needs to be more details about how we'll reach this — who'll lead it and outcomes.

Government departments and services working together will help reach all the goals.

Having your basic needs met makes a big difference. The strategy must include other things (food, housing, finances, community life, the environment) that affect people's mental health.

Government and services need to listen to people better and include them more.

This should also focus on things that affect people's mental health — homelessness, abuse, neglect, violence and substance misuse.


Mental health services don't have enough funding. There needs to be funding to do this.


The actions are good but there needs to be a clear plan for how they will happen.

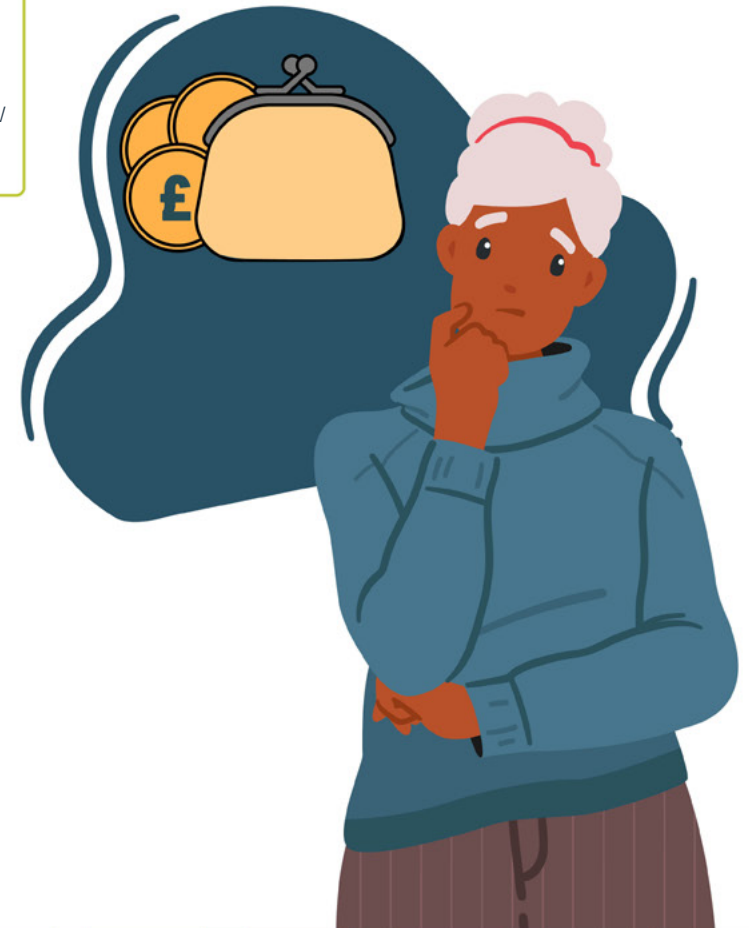
Health impact assessments need to include mental health and wellbeing.

There needs to be better data about mental health and wellbeing so it can be used to improve support and reach the goals of this strategy.

All staff need training on mental health and wellbeing.

 Children and young people talked about how important family is to their mental health and wellbeing.

 Children and young people talked about how anxiety about climate change affected their mental health.



# 5 We asked people what they thought of vision statement 3...



## Vision statement 3:

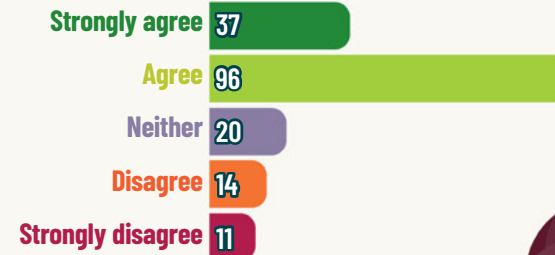
We want a connected system so everyone gets the right support when they first ask for help.

### Actions

#### We will:

- 1 ➔ Make sure all staff have the right advice so they support everyone in the right ways.
- 2 ➔ Make sure all support connects and is joined up so no one faces a gap in support.
- 3 ➔ Work with partners and others to reduce the barriers that stop people getting the support they need.
- 4 ➔ Make sure that everyone knows about trauma and understands how it can affect mental health.
- 5 ➔ Make sure services and organisations put babies, children, young people and their families' mental health and wellbeing at the centre of all work.
- 6 ➔ Make sure people get the right support through pregnancy, birth and early years.
- 7 ➔ Make sure children and young people get the right support in schools.
- 8 ➔ Make sure young people get the right support in college, university and other education settings.
- 9 ➔ Make sure everyone has the information and the support they need in the language they choose. That includes making sure people are getting support in Welsh.
- 10 ➔ Make sure we listen to everyone, including ethnic minority people, and involve people in decisions more.

### 178 responses:



78% Strongly agreed or agreed with what we're going to do to reach this.



# What people said about vision statement 3...

This vision statement is good. It's important that people get the right support at the right time, so services must work together. But there needs to be more details on how it will happen.

There are gaps in services, including services for children and young people, and older people. That needs to change. Services need to be joined up.

Services need to meet people's needs better and be more trauma-informed.

Reducing stigma will help people feel comfortable to ask for support.

Better IT systems are needed to help services share information.

There needs to be the right funding, resources and training to do this.


Advice needs to be easy to find and use.

This strategy needs to change the way services work and make it easier for people to get mental health support.

We need to work with others to reduce the barriers that stop people getting support and improve systems.

Information and services need to be available in Welsh, BSL and other languages.

Linking the NYTH/NEST Framework is good, and there should be a focus on helping people as quickly as possible.

 Children and young people told us waiting lists are too long. This strategy must make sure they get support quicker from mental health services. That includes improving the move from child services to adult services.



# 6 We asked people what they thought of vision statement 4...

## Vision statement 4:

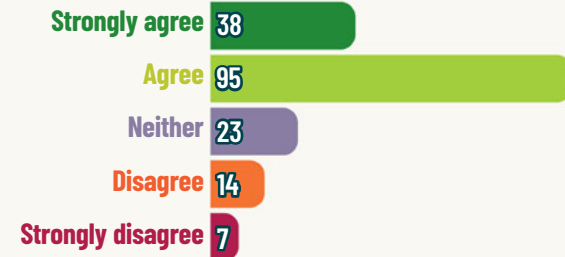
We want all support for mental health to put the person first, to meet their needs in the right way, at the right time, without delays.

### Actions

#### We will:

- 1 ➔ Develop a set of standards and quality statements for health boards and local authorities.
- 2 ➔ Make sure these quality statements help services put people's needs first.
- 3 ➔ Listen to people so we can understand how to improve services.
- 4 ➔ Develop a Mental Health Safety Programme that will improve support.
- 5 ➔ Work to improve how GPs and other health care services support people.
- 6 ➔ Make sure people with severe mental health conditions have support to improve their physical health and lives.
- 7 ➔ Develop a plan to improve access to different therapies to help people with mental health issues like anxiety, and people with long-term physical health conditions.
- 8 ➔ Make sure people living with long-term mental health issues get the right support.
- 9 ➔ Improve community-based mental health support in Wales.
- 10 ➔ Make sure people with substance misuse and mental health needs get the right support.
- 11 ➔ Make sure the Welsh language is supported.
- 12 ➔ Grow and improve online services so they connect to services better and more people get advice and assessments.
- 13 ➔ Make sure services support parents and carers to develop healthy relationships with their babies and young children that build their mental health.
- 14 ➔ Make sure there is strong leadership for mental health services across health boards.
- 15 ➔ Listen to people and record their experiences of support so we can improve services.

### 177 responses:



**80%** Strongly agreed or agreed with what we're going to do to reach this.



# What people said about vision statement 4...

A skilled and well trained workforce is needed for this.

Money and budgets are tight so it could be difficult to deliver.

Having more information about mental health issues would improve support.

There needs to be better systems to collect and share data across Wales.

Services should use the 'No wrong door' approach and connect people to services the first time they ask for help.

People need the right support. It's good this includes using evidence-based therapies because it will mean people get what works best for them.

It's important all services put people first and that people get connected to support as quickly as possible. This strategy needs to make it clear that this needs to happen across Wales — no one should miss out because of where they live.

Services should be trauma-informed.



This doesn't deal with long waiting lists.

Services need to be available and open to everyone including people more at risk:

- neurodivergence people
- families and unpaid carers
- homeless people


**i Neurodivergent** — is when someone's brain functions differently.

If this is going to work we need to focus on the transitions between services, including from child to adult mental health services.

Wales needs better mental health services for deaf people.

Mental health support during pregnancy and for parents with infants, including dads is important.

People need support in Welsh and any other language they choose.

 Children and young people said some communities have challenges because there aren't enough professionals to support them. That's not fair.

It's important to listen to people and involve them in developing plans and making decisions.



# 7 We asked people what they thought about our plans to support the mental health system...

## We want to improve:

- digital and technology
- how services collect data and measure outcomes
- support for the mental health workforce
- physical infrastructure (buildings and other spaces)
- the use of science, research and innovation
- communication.

## 171 responses:


Strongly agree 34

Agree 110

Neither 17

Disagree 5


Strongly disagree 5

 **84%** Strongly agreed or agreed we should do this.

We need to be clear about what data is needed, and how services should use it.

Information needs to be clear and easy to understand. It needs to be available in Welsh and different languages. It also needs to meet people's needs.

Services need to use the same terms and language.

 Children and young people said we need to support education staff and make sure they have training so they can support people from different communities and those who have protected characteristics.

## People said:

These are all areas that need to improve.

It will take resources, funding and good planning to do this.

There needs to be more information about how this will happen, and what success looks like.

Improving digital and technology is important but there needs to be other options too as this doesn't work for everyone.

There needs to be more investment in the workforce. We need to:

- support staff wellbeing
- include organisations
- make sure staff have training
- make sure staff are trauma-informed.

Services need support to use technology in the right ways — for keeping records, sharing information, appointments, social media, and more.

It's important to make sure all buildings and spaces are fit for purpose and easy to use.

We need to use science, research, and innovation better. This will need enough funding and better processes.



# 8 We asked people what they thought of the strategy...

## People said:

The actions are good but there needs to be more details on how it will be delivered and monitored.

People need to be listened to and involved, including children and young people.

### Services need clear guidance on how to do this.

It needs to be clearer on:

- who will lead and deliver this
- how people will be held accountable if they don't do it
- the role of the NHS, the National Office for Care, organisations and community-based support
- how it will work locally, regionally and nationally
- funding.

The strategy needs to focus more on collecting data and research. This can improve support, and make sure services are value for money.

The focus should include support for:

- substance misuse
- bipolar patients
- perinatal and infants
- people with long-term conditions
- older people
- people who are isolated
- life transitions and changes.

To deliver this, services and systems need to 'join-up'.

Services need to support Black, Asian and Ethnic minority communities in ways that respect their culture.

There needs to be clear, easy to understand information about services.

There needs to be more clear information to raise awareness about mental health. Social media could be part of this.

This needs a communication plan.



Children and young people said they want to see real and lasting change. They want to see clear leadership, with messaging from political leaders that mental health and wellbeing are priorities.



# 9 We asked if it was clear this strategy is for all ages...

## 164 responses:



### People said:

It needs to be clearer that it's for all ages.

This is good but it could be challenging to do. Some of the vision statements feel like they are more focused on adults.

It needs to be clear what support looks like across all ages and life.

It needs to do more to meet the needs of older people.

It needs to do more to meet the needs of children and young people.

There aren't enough details about supporting people moving from child to adult services and adult to older adult services.

Children and young people said there needs to be more information targeting their needs, including information about rights.

# 10 We asked if there are any other impacts to think about, positive or negative...

### People said:

Going forward, it needs to be clear how this will be monitored and reviewed.

We need to think more about how this will impact minority groups and the barriers they face — LGBTQ+, ethnic minorities, women, disabled people and more.

We need to look at the impact this will have on all areas of people's life, people's rights and all-ages. We need to check how it will impact the whole population of Wales.

We need to make sure that this strategy doesn't exclude some groups — homeless youth, young care leavers, transgender people.

Lack of resources and funding could impact this.

It needs to be clearer how this will impact children and young people, including those from minority groups. They have different needs and need to be supported in the right ways.

It's not clear how we will reduce or deal with any negative impacts.  
*Children and young*

Rural areas and smaller towns may find this more challenging. But urban areas might too as they have larger areas of poverty and other issues.

people said this strategy has to include other things (basic needs — food, housing, finances, community life, the environment) that affect people's mental health and wellbeing. For many young people, these needs are not met.



# 11 We asked if this has any impact on the Welsh language...

# We asked if there are any other comments...

## People said:


This strategy will have a positive impact on the Welsh language. It will help make sure people have mental health services in Welsh.

The strategy will have little or no impact on the Welsh language because:

- there needs to be more funding for Welsh language training
- there needs to be more Welsh speaking workforce
- students need to be able to learn Welsh so there's enough workers in the future.

It's good that this links to other plans and goals that support the Welsh language — More Than Just Words and a million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050.

It's not enough to just promote the active offer: services need to be made available in Welsh.

 A young person told us 'I really like that there's more emphasis on support in the language of your choice'.

## People said:

Mental health services need enough funding to do this, including community-based services.

It needs to be clear what data will be collected and the systems that will be used to collect it.


This should do more to reduce stigma and empower people to ask for help.

This needs to be set out clearly so everyone understands their role, leadership, the timetable and funding available.

This strategy and other information needs to be clear and easy to understand.

Services need to work together because issues like poverty and not having a safe, stable home has a big impact on people's mental health.

We need to focus more on unpaid carers. It's important to support them and reduce their stress.

 Children and young people said there needs to be clear targets from the beginning and they should be involved in setting them.



# Thanks for reading this

We have taken everything people have told us and we are using it to develop our final Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy and its action plan.

You can read the full report here:

## **i** Getting support

If you feel you can't keep yourself safe, it's a mental health emergency. It's important to get some help.

Whatever you're going through, these people are there to talk to:

 [MEIC](#) on  **080 880 23456**

 text SHOUT to **85258**

 **111 Press 2** [NHS Helpline for Urgent Mental Health Support](#)

 Childline on **08000 1111**

These services are for anyone who's struggling. They won't judge you.

**They're free, they're anonymous, and they're always open.**

