



What you told us

In between February and June 2024, we asked you to share your views on our new 'All-Age Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy: 2024 – 2034.'

Through workshops, conversations, interviews, craft activities and your own private reflections, you told us what matters most to you, where the new strategy looks good, and the ways in which it could be made better.

- ➔ 405 of you took part, from all parts of Wales and with a huge diversity of interests, needs and lived experiences.
- ➔ You shared 1,235 unique insights, each of which we have listened to and thought about carefully.
- ➔ We have organised these into 13 key categories – 13 things our new strategy must do!

This is what you told us ...





1. Access to mental health services and support

The strategy must ensure that it becomes quicker and easier to access mental health services and support in Wales, and that this support is flexible and responsive to the specific needs of each and every individual.

This includes:

- ➔ **Availability of services:** with it made faster and easier to get the support you need.
- ➔ **Flexibility of services:** directly meeting the needs of young people.
- ➔ **Multi-sector, multi-agency approaches:** with more community-based support.
- ➔ **Information sharing:** making it easier to know how and where to access support.

“Staff working in mental health services in Wales need to be better trained in recognising the intersectionality aspect of mental health.”

“There has to be the right amount of funding given so that the strategy can be implemented.”

“[We need] more ‘teen specific support’ – can get lost between children and adult services.”

14% of all comments were about this



2. A trained and skilled workforce

The strategy must ensure that all those who can provide mental health and wellbeing support, both within the health system and beyond it, are fully skilled and trained to do so – both professionals and non-professionals alike.

This includes:

- ➔ **Regular training:** for all mental health and wellbeing professionals.
- ➔ **In school training:** for teachers and teaching assistants.
- ➔ **Equalities training:** for all.
- ➔ **Support for non-professionals:** including parents, peers and others.

2% of all comments were about this

“Staff need the right skills - but also need to include parents and community leaders.”

“Consider adding near peer coaching - everyday people receiving training opportunities to support others.”

“Trauma informed practices - this needs to encompass everyone with lived experience of trauma regardless of their coping mechanisms or how 'easy to work with' they are.”



3. Information and signposting

The strategy must enable the effective signposting and sharing of essential information regarding mental health and wellbeing and improve awareness and engagement with existing support and services.

This includes:

- ➔ **Social media:** with opportunities to better share information.
- ➔ **Clarity of information:** with simplified, joined-up messaging.
- ➔ **Child-friendly information.**
- ➔ **Two-way information sharing:** gathering feedback as well as sharing information.

1% of all comments were about this

“There's not enough information on where children can go for mental health support.”

“Too many posters and info everywhere - don't know what to do”

“Social media has changed - giving you so many resources to support.”

“I like that people will have the right knowledge and will be pointed in the right direction.”



4. Education and the school environment

The strategy must directly connect with the school system and acknowledge both the critical role of schools in supporting mental health and wellbeing, and the risks to young people's mental health and wellbeing which can be caused by the school environment and experience.

This includes:

- ➔ **In school wellbeing support:** including in-school wellbeing centres and improved access to counselling within school.
- ➔ **Bullying:** including cyber bullying.
- ➔ **Stress and workload:** including the impact of exams on mental wellbeing.

6% of all comments were about this

“Do schools fit into this? They identify who needs support but there aren't resources to provide support.”

“[We need] resilience training in school.”

“Data sharing can prevent schools and other services collaborating as well as they could.”

“Having a lovely teacher.” (Things that help my wellbeing).



5. Play, recreation and social networks

The strategy must ensure our young people are given continued and enhanced opportunities to play, to connect with one another, and to form strong and supportive friendships and connections with their peers.

This includes:

- ➔ **Sport and hobbies:** with many finding these critical to positive mental wellbeing.
- ➔ **Gaming:** with many positive impacts to gaming alongside the risks.
- ➔ **Social clubs and spaces:** with young people expressing concerns over a lack of places where they can 'hang out' with their friends.

7% of all comments were about this

"I feel great when I play with my friends"





6. Equity and inclusion

The strategy must ensure that access to mental health services and support is fair and open to all, and that those who provide services are truly representative of the diversity of the people they exist to support.

This includes:

- ➔ **Representation:** including of marginalised communities amongst health care professionals.
- ➔ **Clear and accessible language.**
- ➔ **Rural/urban divides:** with improved access to support for rural communities needed.
- ➔ **Trust:** to be rebuilt or established between communities and service providers.

“Children and young people from marginalised communities often face additional barriers when accessing services.”

“I think it's great that the strategy recognises some people are more susceptible to having poor mental health.”

“Representation matters - there has to be a priority from Welsh Government to ensure staff working in mental health are more diverse.”

10% of all comments were about this



7. Supportive family and peer networks

The strategy must acknowledge the vital role of young people's families in protecting and supporting their mental health and wellbeing and ensure young people's parents and guardians are better equipped to understand and effectively support them.

This includes:

- ➔ **Empowering parents:** with the understanding to support their children.
- ➔ **Physical contact:** and the importance of being hugged.
- ➔ **Bereavement support.**
- ➔ **Social networks and social media.**
- ➔ **Pets:** and their vital role in wellbeing.

7% of all comments were about this

“Parents to always be involved if that's what the individual wants regardless of age.”

“Ma Cathod yn mwy poblogaidd na cwn.” / “Cats are more popular than dogs” (What helps my wellbeing)

“Need to support parents to better understand.”

“Having a loving family.” (What helps my wellbeing)



8. Prevention, resilience and mental health literacy

The strategy must ensure a balance is struck between reaction and prevention, and that our young people grow up with understanding, resilience, and supportive structures around them which make mental health and wellbeing challenges less likely to arise or become critical.

This includes:

- ➔ Emotional intelligence and mental health literacy.
- ➔ **Community-based support:** with upstream investment in positive community-based activities seen as critical to reduce downstream mental health crises.

7% of all comments were about this

“Re. climate anxiety, exam anxiety etc. Why are people getting so anxious and what can we do to build resilience? (E.g. shifting the curriculum away from such an academic focus).”

“Growing as a person (self-esteem, confidence etc.) reduces the chance of having mental health challenges – that’s where the focus should be.”

“Young people and children find it hard to recognise their feelings.”



9. Mental health stigma

The strategy must combat stigma surrounding discussing mental health and wellbeing and make it easier for people to talk about their feelings and experiences.

This includes:

- ➔ **Being taken seriously:** with some young people feeling that they are judged, or are not listened to, by professionals.
- ➔ **Consequences for discrimination:** with those who stigmatise, prejudice and bully others being held to account.
- ➔ **Emotional and Psychological safety:** with supportive spaces, cultures and environments.

3% of all comments were about this

"I want the people writing this strategy to remember that there's not a 'look' to mental health, anyone can have it."

"I wish people wouldn't be embarrassed to talk about their problems."

"The world is more validating now - you receive the same level of care, concern and practical help for mental illness."



10. Safety and security

The strategy must acknowledge that positive mental health and wellbeing are contingent on having your basic needs met, and that for many young people, these needs are not met.

This includes:

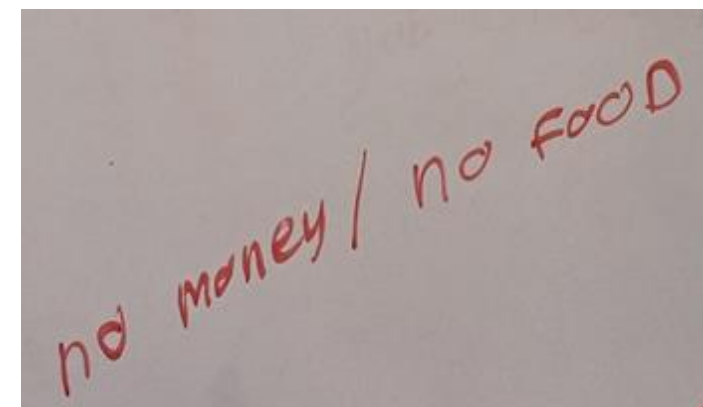
- ➔ **Housing:** including the impact of homelessness, fear of homelessness, and the lack of affordable housing on mental wellbeing.
- ➔ **Hunger:** with 'being hungry' a key factor in harming mental health and wellbeing, alongside wider reflections on the relationship between physical health and mental health.

3% of all comments were about this

“Being hungry.” (What harms my wellbeing).

“Support homeless people.”

“Being able to feel comfortable sharing – and having the right places to share.”





11. Climate anxiety and nature connection

The strategy must acknowledge the importance of healthy lifestyles and nature connection to young people, and the relationship between the mental health and wellbeing of young people in Wales, and the impact of unhealthy environments, and the global climate crisis.

This includes:

- ➔ The global climate crisis.
- ➔ The local natural environment.
- ➔ **Healthy lifestyles:** with young people valuing opportunities to exercise, to play sports, and citing the importance of growing and eating fresh and healthy food.

3% of all comments were about this

“We need to grow more trees.”





12. Mental health leadership

The strategy must commit Welsh Government to providing clear leadership with regards to mental health and wellbeing, through its behaviours, actions, and ensuring that the strategy is a genuine driver of change.

This includes:

- ➔ **Political leadership:** demonstrating commitment to mental health and wellbeing.
- ➔ **Funding:** of key services and support.
- ➔ **Cross-government working.**
- ➔ **Dissemination:** of the strategy far and wide.
- ➔ **Ongoing monitoring and evaluation:** to ensure it's making a difference.

9% of all comments were about this

“Lots of people worry this strategy is gonna be another piece of paper without proper changes.”

“Professionals need more humility and curiosity instead of relying on their assumptions.”

“We need a change in attitude from mental health professionals.”

“It's also about how Government departments connect with other, non-governmental support services (e.g. charities).”



13. On-going co-production and involvement

The strategy must commit Welsh Government to ongoing co-production and involvement - ensuring young people continue to have opportunities to shape its evaluation, implementation and future development.

This includes:

- ➔ **Implementation:** with a desire to help put the strategy into action.
- ➔ **Evaluation:** to measure its impact together.
- ➔ **Feedback:** with those who have participated in the process so far.
- ➔ **Diversity of approaches:** with a need for many different ways for people to be involved.

5% of all comments were about this

“Allow patients/ to come up with the plan for what the government should put their money to regards to mental health to provide then money going in the right directions and not be wasted on useless stuff.”

“It’s too early to say if we’re listened to yet, but it feels as if things are being done the right.”



What next?

In October the Welsh Government will be publishing the consultation reports summing up everything that everyone has told them about the strategy. From these reports they will then finalise the strategy and it will be published.

After that, the Welsh Government want to make sure that they continue to hear the voices of children and young people on mental health and wellbeing and there may be opportunities in the future to participate in more work on the strategy and other related engagement.

To keep up to date with the latest information visit > [Draft mental health and wellbeing strategy | GOV.WALES](#)



All engagement (and the production of this report) was led by Co-production Lab Wales on behalf of Welsh Government.