

DRAFT Mental Health and Wellbeing Delivery Plan

Duration of Plan

This plan is intended to align with the programme for government timeline and lays out key activity for the next five years, with a focus on new actions to be progressed over this period.

Progress Update

In addition to actions that were completed under the previous plan, it is recognised that a range of work actioned under the initial Mental Health and Wellbeing Delivery Plan is now being delivered on an ongoing basis. To build on positive work to date this plan will focus on next steps.

Foundational work that is now considered 'business as usual' or which is captured in other key mental health plans (e.g. Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2026-29) has not been included in this plan (see Annex B). The aim is to avoid duplication. However, the following areas of focus remain central to our work and will be a key part of all actions:

- a commitment to working in accordance with the Verity House agreement and in keeping with whole system approaches
- embedding trauma informed and responsive approaches across our actions
- ensuring an approach that promotes equalities and human rights and challenges stigma
- reducing the number of suicide deaths in Scotland, whilst tackling the inequalities that contribute to suicide
- recognising the crucial importance of workforce skill and capacity in the delivery of quality mental health and wellbeing support and services.

Our Vision and Wider Policy Context

The [Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#) sets out our vision **of a Scotland, free from stigma and inequality, where everyone fulfils their right to achieve the best mental health and wellbeing possible**. A range of outcomes and priorities are set out in the Strategy to help us achieve this vision (see Annex A).

Since the publication of the Strategy and the previous Delivery Plan, the wider policy and delivery landscape has evolved. The Population Health Framework (PHF) and Service Renewal Framework (SRF) were published in Summer 2025.

The PHF sets out the approach to improving health and reducing health inequalities for the next decade, promoting everyone's right to achieve the highest possible standard of physical and mental health.

The SRF provides a high-level guide for change, to ensure the sustainability, efficiency, quality, and accessibility of health and social care services in Scotland. Together, these documents and the associated governance provide key drivers for change across the system for years to come and can support the vision set out in the Strategy.

Setting the Mental Health and Wellbeing Delivery Strategy within the context of the Service Renewal and Population Health Frameworks is important to ensure mental health provision is integrated within wider health and local planning. The Support, Care and Treatment Pathway for mental health and wellbeing in the Strategy reflects the SRF principles of prevention, people, community, population planning and digital; just as our work on early intervention and prevention aligns with the [Marmot principles for good population health](#).

Success of the Delivery Plan will depend on all parts of the system working in partnership to deliver our shared aims, and helping individuals to understand where they can go for advice and support, depending on what needs they have.

Draft Actions – Considerations

When drafting the actions we have been informed by the feedback from the Leadership Board by focussing on fewer actions than the previous Delivery Plan. We have also aimed to align with the principles agreed by Leadership Board:

- Deliverable – Feasible within current workforce, budget, timelines and aligned with delivery partners
- Impactful – Supports strategic outcomes, improves services and experiences
- Sustainable – Affordable long-term, supported by stakeholders
- Financially aligned – Meets agreed financial principles and an understanding of costing
- Equalities and human rights – Advances equality, reduces disparities, supports legal duties

Draft Actions

Draft Action	Links to Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy
SYSTEM RENEWAL We will drive transformation of NHS mental health services across Scotland over the next 5 years, as part of an integrated, whole system approach to mental health and wellbeing support. This will ensure people can quickly and easily access high quality, responsive care that meets their needs Key deliverables to deliver this system transformation are: - Produce a Strategic Needs Assessment to understand Scotland's population mental health and wellbeing needs, now and in the future (by winter 2026). - Review our current MH quality indicators and performance measures to create a set of meaningful outcome measures (based on outcomes and experiences for people) - on which our entire mental health and wellbeing system is strategically planned and evaluated. (by summer 2027) - Develop an initial mental health and wellbeing Service Blueprint for Scotland, which is then operationalised by delivery partners (by autumn 2027). This Blueprint will set out: - optimal models of stepped and matched care to meet the range and complexity of population mental health and wellbeing need, allowing for appropriate flexibility across different geographic areas. - how seamless, person-centred care is achieved through integrated service planning and design across community based, primary and secondary care, and commissioned services. - which services should be delivered nationally (including digitally), sub-nationally (using NHS sub-national planning structures) and through local partnerships, and - the governance, workforce, infrastructure and funding models necessary to deliver reformed services. - A specification for Community Mental Health Teams which will support the shift of more care into community settings.	- Contributes to outcomes -1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 - Relevant priorities – 3, 6, 7

Related actions:

Workforce

- By 2030, Public Services Delivery Scotland (PSD) will strengthen NHS Scotland mental health workforce data collection and expand published official statistics to support workforce planning by helping to inform the shape, size and sustainability of the future workforce and system-wide improvements in mental health services across Scotland..
- To support the education and training of the multidisciplinary workforce to deliver consistent and high quality psychological care and practice within NHS Scotland, with a focus on preventive care, PSD Scotland will develop and oversee the implementation of new guidance.

Digital

Across the life of the plan, we will seek to improve access to appropriate digital supports and services, as well as the quality and safety of relevant digital provision. Work will include:

- Continuing to develop and test digital technologies to support mental health and wellbeing, as well as continuing to improve access to digital therapies (by end 2027).
- Recognising the quantity and variance of mental health digital resources now on the market, COSLA and the Scottish Government will explore options for supporting national and local partners to procure safe, quality digital resources across the public sector, identifying next steps by Spring 2027.

Legal reforms

- The Scottish Government will deliver a staged approach to mental health and capacity law reform following the Scottish Mental Health Law Review, with an initial focus in 2026-29 on Adults with Incapacity policy development and preparation for updated legislation.
- The Scottish Government will work to improve the function of current mental health legislation. Specifically, to improve safeguards around restraint and seclusion and updating the Code of Practice [by DATE TBC].

Assurance • National assurance will be strengthened through the establishment of routine inspection programmes by Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS), including: ○ Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services inspections ○ new inspection for learning disability services ○ stronger follow-up to support and ensure services act on inspection findings. • Consider how the Scottish Government and partners including employers and PSD use reports and intelligence from MWC, PSD and HIS to inform future education and training needs for the workforce [by DATE TBC].	
PREVENTION / UNIVERSAL SERVICES	
A key area of focus in the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy is to prevent mental health issues occurring or escalating. This will be achieved by tackling underlying causes and working across organisational boundaries to address factors contributing to poor mental health. • By the end of 2026 [TBC], Scottish Government will have completed work to understand the current stressors and protective factors that affect children and young people’s mental wellbeing, including in relation to social media, screen time, sleep, body image, toxic masculinity and AI. • Over the course of 2027, Scottish Government will develop and enact new public policy to respond to those stressors, and offer children and young people advice and support to navigate their impacts. This will include delivering a cross-Government public health campaign focused on raising awareness of online harms and the associated impacts on mental wellbeing, as well as promoting safe and healthy online behaviours for young people and their parents. This work will be informed by children and young people and those who support them.	• Contributes to outcomes -1, 3, 4, 5, 8 • Relevant priorities – 2, 5,10

Recognising the strong link between mental health and economic inactivity, the Scottish Government and COSLA will engage with employability partnerships and employers over the course of this plan to embed a core understanding of preventative approaches that can promote good mental health and reduce the negative impact that wider issues can have on someone's mental health within the culture and delivery of support.

- This will include continuing to embed person-centred support as a core principle to our approach through employability services, working closely with employers to promote flexible working practices. This focus will help to ensure more people are supported to take up employment, return to work or to remain in work, contributing to improved mental health and wellbeing outcomes and increased economic activity.
- In 2027-28, we will focus on young people's mental health within employability, working with system-wide partners to agree a set of priorities and co-ordinated activities that can support the mental health needs of young people transitioning into employment – so that they are better equipped to secure and sustain employment – and promote and embed an inclusive and supportive culture within organisations.

Recognising the complex connections between housing and positive mental health and wellbeing, in 2027-28 COSLA will work with housing associations to share information, resources and training opportunities that support positive mental health and waiting well for those in social housing.

We will support leadership, locally and nationally, to embed trauma informed approaches and an understanding of prevention across policy, decision making and service delivery:

- Working with the improvement service in 2027-2028, COSLA will provide up to date information for local leaders, supporting the consideration of mental health and wellbeing, and the application of a trauma informed approach across the breadth of their work.

COMMUNITY LED MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING SUPPORT	
Over the next three years we will expand community-based mental health and wellbeing supports and services with the development of walk-in mental health hubs across Scotland focused on early intervention and prevention and providing immediate support for those experiencing crisis. This will build on learning from existing walk-in hub models, including the SAMH Nook, and will be aligned to work on mental health unscheduled care and safe spaces. A key focus will be on strengthening links between community-based supports, primary care and mental health services, while giving careful consideration throughout to the composition of the workforce required to deliver these services effectively.	• Contributes to outcomes -1, 4, 6,9 • Relevant priorities – 2,3, 4, 7
CRISIS SUPPORT	
Recognising people can present with a wide range of mental health conditions, it is important for those in crisis to get urgent support when they need it. • The Scottish Government will provide six Health Boards with £986,000 in 2026-27 to work collaboratively to improve crisis support for children, young people and their families. Learning from these early adopter sites will support further funding in 2027/28 onwards, subject to clear evidence of improvements to children and young people's lives during the first year of funding. • The Scottish Government will work with the Scottish Ambulance Service and partners to expand the mental health triage car scheme across the country informed by an evaluation of the current service which is expected in Summer 2026. • We will expand the NHS 24 Mental Health Hub to include Psychological Therapies and invest an additional £3.5 million this year to make it easier for people to get the help they need, reducing pressure on A&E and other emergency services like Police Scotland.	• Contributes to outcomes -6 &7 • Relevant priorities – 4, 6 ,7

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)	
Recognising the distinct needs of children and young people experiencing moderate to severe mental ill health, the Scottish Government will work with health boards, partners and key stakeholders to continue to improve access to, quality of, and outcomes from CAMHS, specialist CAMHS and adolescent inpatient mental health services: • The Scottish Government will work with health Boards to improve understanding of referrals not accepted to CAMHS, including through analysis to identify patterns and opportunities to strengthen pathways and access to appropriate support [by DATE TBC] • The Scottish Government will work with health boards and Public Health Scotland to review and update national CAMHS data standards and definitions, improving the consistency and comparability of data across Scotland and strengthening the evidence base for monitoring performance and supporting service improvement [by DATE TBC] • By [DATE TBC], the Scottish government will work with regional partners, NHS Boards and key stakeholders to support the development of a national specification for adolescent psychiatric inpatient services, including agreed governance arrangements, scope and delivery milestones.	• Contributes to outcomes - potentially 6,7,9 • Relevant priorities – potentially 6, 7, 10
NEURODEVELOPMENTAL SUPPORT	
Recognising the need to improve neurodevelopmental (ND) support across Scotland, the Scottish Government will work with local authorities, health boards and partners to strengthen neuro-affirming, needs-based support for children, young people and adults: • The Scottish Government will adopt the Royal College of Psychiatrists' 4-tiered national approach for neurodevelopmental conditions. By the end of 2026 we will set out a timeline and route-map for adoption and integration of the 4-tier approach. • The Scottish Government and COSLA will continue to progress the short (2026-27), medium (2026-27) and long-term (2026-28) actions from the review of implementation of the National Neurodevelopmental Specification for Children and Young People, with support of the CYP ND Taskforce. • Supported by £7.6 million of Scottish Government funding in 2026-27, work will be undertaken to develop and embed locally informed neuro-affirming support for children and young people with neurodevelopmental needs, including those who are awaiting diagnosis, have received a diagnosis, or do not require a diagnosis. Funding is intended to support the development and delivery of community-based and early support offers, including through universal services, in line with local need.	• Contributes to outcomes - 6,7,8,9 • Relevant priorities – 3,7,9

• The Scottish Government, supported by its partners, will improve the evidence base to continue improving children and young people ND support, including consolidation and sharing of emerging evidence from recent Scottish Government-funded work, consideration of data availability and collection, self-evaluation and reporting aligned to the children and young people ND Specification. This will seek to support understanding of need, access and quality without increasing unnecessary reporting burden or reporting of metrics that do not drive improvement and access to timely support. Timeline: 2026-28. • The Scottish Government will work with partners to address issues where NHS services do not recognise a diagnosis of autism or ADHD from private providers to ensure everyone can access the care, support and appropriate interventions they need in a way that works for them. Timeline: Within the first year of the new Parliament.	
JUSTICE PATHWAYS / PUBLIC PROTECTION	
The Scottish Government will improve mental health support across justice pathways and public protection as well as strengthen the safe, effective delivery of forensic mental health services by taking forward the following actions: • Over the period of this Plan, the Scottish Government will work with justice, health and social care partners to strengthen pathways for people with mental health needs who come into contact with the justice system, ensuring timely access to appropriate care and support at each stage. • The Scottish Government will improve the effectiveness of multi-agency working to support public protection, including through strengthened arrangements for information sharing, risk management and oversight. This will include ongoing delivery of Ministers' statutory responsibilities in relation to restricted patients and continued alignment with MAPPA/MAPPS arrangements. • The Scottish Government will take forward work with partners to improve flow through forensic mental health pathways, reducing delays in assessment, admission, transfer and discharge, and supporting care to be delivered in the least restrictive setting, including across transitions between custody, hospital and the community. • The Scottish Government will also progress improvements to governance and national oversight of forensic mental health services, supporting more consistent, person-centred care and reducing unwarranted variation across the system.	• Contributes to outcomes -5, 6 &7 • Relevant priorities – 5, 7, 8

Annex A – Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy Outcomes and Priorities

Outcomes

1. Improved overall mental wellbeing and reduced inequalities.
2. Improved quality of life for people with mental health conditions, free from stigma and discrimination.
3. Improved knowledge and understanding of mental health and wellbeing and how to access appropriate support.
4. Better equipped communities to support people's mental health and wellbeing and provide opportunities to connect with others.
5. More effective cross-policy action to address the wide-ranging factors that impact people's mental health and wellbeing.
6. Increased availability of timely, effective support, care and treatment that promote and support people's mental health and wellbeing, meeting individual needs.
7. Better informed policy, support, care and treatment, shaped by people with lived experience and practitioners, with a focus on quality and recovery.
8. Better access to and use of evidence and data in policy and practice.
9. A diverse, skilled, supported and sustainable workforce across all sectors.

Priorities

1. Tackle mental health stigma and discrimination where it exists and ensure people can talk about their mental health and wellbeing and access the person-centred support they require.
2. Improve population mental health and wellbeing, building resilience and enabling people to access the right information and advice in the right place for them and in a range of formats.
3. Increase mental health capacity within General Practice and primary care, universal services and community-based mental health supports. Promote the whole system, whole person approach by helping partners to work together and removing barriers faced by people from marginalised groups when accessing services.
4. Expand and improve the support available to people in mental health distress and crisis and those who care for them through our national approach on Time, Space and Compassion.
5. Work across Scottish and Local Government and with partners to develop a collective approach to understanding and shared responsibility for promoting good mental health and addressing the causes of mental health inequalities, supporting groups who are particularly at risk.
6. Improve mental health and wellbeing support in a wide range of settings with reduced waiting times and improved outcomes for people accessing all services, including CAMHS and psychological therapies.

7. Ensure people receive the quality of care and treatment required for the time required, supporting care as close to home as possible and promoting independence and recovery.
8. Continue to improve support for those in the forensic mental health system.
9. Strengthen support and care pathways for people requiring neurodevelopmental support, working in partnership with health, social care, education, the third sector and other delivery partners. This will ensure those who need it receive the right care and support at the right time in a way that works for them.
10. Reduce the risk of poor mental health and wellbeing in adult life by promoting the importance of good relationships and trauma-informed approaches from the earliest years of life, taking account where relevant adverse childhood experiences. We will ensure help is available early on when there is a risk of poor mental health, and support the physical health and wellbeing of people with mental health conditions.

Annex B – Mental Health publications

[Self harm Strategy and Action Plan \(2023\)](#)

[Student Mental Health Action Plan \(2024\)](#)

[Creating Hope Together: Scotland's Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2026-2029 \(2026\)](#)

[Supporting children and young people experiencing a mental health crisis: framework \(2026\)](#)

[Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Pathway – National Framework \(2026\)](#)