

National Physical Health and Long-Term Mental Health Conditions Survey

Background

The All-Wales Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025–2035 includes an ambition to *‘prioritise action that supports the improvement of the physical health of people with long-term mental health conditions, reducing the mortality gap between people who have long-term mental health conditions and those who do not’*.

People with long-term mental health conditions are more likely to experience poor physical health and die younger than the general population. Many of these deaths are linked to physical health conditions that can be prevented or treated. Wales is working to better understand this issue and improve outcomes.

In response, the Strategic Programme for Mental Health has established a programme of work to provide national leadership, coordination and oversight of physical health improvement for people with long-term mental health conditions. This term is commonly used to describe conditions such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and other psychotic illnesses that can have a significant impact on daily life and functioning.

Evidence already tells us that improving physical health outcomes for people living with long-term mental health conditions is complex. We want to understand the issue through a whole-system lens because outcomes are rarely created by a single organisation, team, or intervention. Instead, they are shaped by how different parts of the health and care system work together. **No single organisation or team can effectively address this challenge alone.**

As part of this programme, we want to learn from people with lived experience of long-term mental health conditions about what helps and what gets in the way of achieving good physical health.

Your experiences will help us to:

- Understand what helps people improve and maintain their physical health.
- Identify barriers that make it harder to stay physically well.
- Learn how mental health, physical health, and wider support services can work better together.
- Understand what changes are needed to help people live longer, healthier lives.
- Develop a national improvement plan for Wales that is informed by the experiences of people who use services.

The findings from this engagement will be considered alongside evidence from research, learning from mortality reviews, and wider stakeholder engagement. Together, these sources of information will help identify priorities for improvement and inform the development of a national improvement plan for Wales aimed at improving physical health outcomes and reducing premature mortality among people with long-term mental health conditions.

About this Survey

This survey has been informed by research, national guidance and improvement programmes exploring the physical health experiences of people living with long-term mental health conditions, including work undertaken by the DIAMONDS programme, NHS England and Mental Health Together.

Taking Part

This survey is voluntary and is intended for people living in Wales who have experience of a long-term mental health condition. We are grateful for the time and experience shared by everyone who chooses to contribute. Your responses will help shape a national programme of work to improve the physical health of people with long-term mental health conditions in Wales.

Who Should Complete This Survey?

This survey is intended for people living in Wales who have experience of a long-term mental health condition. We are interested in hearing

from people with a wide range of experiences, whether or not they currently use mental health services.

If you are a family member, carer, friend, or supporter of someone with a long-term mental health condition, please contact us if you would like to contribute in other ways.

Organisations and Community Groups

We recognise that some people may prefer to share their experiences in a group setting or may not find online surveys accessible.

If you work for an organisation, community group, support service or voluntary sector organisation and would be willing to host NHS Wales Performance and Improvement to discuss these questions in person with people you support, we would be pleased to hear from you.

We are particularly interested in hearing from groups who work with:

- People with long-term mental health conditions.
- Carers and family members.
- People from rarely heard communities.
- Welsh-speaking communities.
- People who may experience barriers to participating in surveys.

To discuss arranging a facilitated conversation or focus group, please contact:

Charlotte.Thomas9@wales.nhs.uk

We are committed to ensuring that as many people as possible can share their experiences and influence the development of a national improvement plan for Wales.

What Happens Next?

The information you share through this survey will help us understand what helps people with long-term mental health conditions to achieve

and maintain good physical health, and what barriers make this more difficult.

Your experiences will be considered alongside other pieces of evidence to help us:

- Identify common themes, challenges and opportunities for improvement.
- Understand what matters most to people with lived experience.
- Identify priority areas for action across Wales.
- Inform recommendations for improving physical health outcomes.
- Support the development of a co-produced National Improvement Plan for Wales.
- Help reduce health inequalities, narrow the mortality gap and improve quality of life for people living with long-term mental health conditions.

The findings will be reviewed as part of the national programme of work to improve the physical health of people with long-term mental health conditions in Wales and will help shape future improvement activity across health and care services.

Individual responses will remain confidential and will be reported only in summary form. No individuals will be identified in any reports, publications, or presentations arising from this work.

By sharing your experiences, you are helping to shape a national approach to improving physical health outcomes and ensuring that the voices of people with lived experience are central to future service improvement and system development in Wales.

Thank you for your contribution.

References

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- NHS Surveys Programme. *Community Mental Health Survey*.
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