

The Welsh Declaration for Mental Health and Well-being

“Defining a vision, inspiring action”

In their St Vincent Declaration¹, the World Health Organisation (WHO) drew attention to the great importance of diabetes and its impact on prolonged ill health and premature death. The WHO has now recognised that today mental ill health causes even greater levels of disability than diabetes and other chronic physical illnesses. In the WHO Helsinki Declaration², European Ministers of Health acknowledged this importance and committed themselves to action.

The Ministers said

“We endorse the statement that there is no health without mental health. Mental Health is central to the human, social and economic capital of nations.”

Mental ill health is a major and growing health problem at all ages and in all cultures which causes early death and general ill health. This has an adverse impact on our society and economy, affecting us all either directly or indirectly.

Mental ill health increases mortality and morbidity and has associated complications at an individual and public health level that must be addressed appropriately if the aspiration of improved health and wellbeing for the people of Wales is to be realised. In addition to the poor chronic disease outcomes caused by associated mental ill health, the complications of obesity, addictive habits, medically unexplained symptoms, accidents, unemployment, debt, poverty, relationship and behavioural problems need to be recognised and tackled.

Wales has eight out of the ten poorest and most deprived health areas in the UK⁴ and some of the poorest health in Europe⁵. The connection between poor physical health and poor mental health cannot be ignored. Mental ill health is therefore a major economic issue in Wales. In addition to Designed for Life, Wales also requires a primary care mental health and wellbeing strategy if it is to achieve its aim of improving health and social care in 21st Century Wales.

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A Time for Action:

“Adopting Welsh solutions to meet Welsh challenges”³

Wales must give formal recognition to the growing and widespread problems of mental ill health and its relationship to general ill health and deploy available resources to aid the recovery of body, mind and spirit.

It is within the power of the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG), working in partnership with health services, local government, the voluntary sector, business community and educational institutions to

create conditions that will reduce the heavy burden of illness, sickness, stigma and premature death caused by mental ill health and to promote mental health and wellbeing.

Planning and strategies for the identification, management and prevention of mental ill health in Wales have already been formulated within the local, national and European context. The time has now come for action to be taken which is long overdue.

As **individuals** in Wales we **all**:

- Have a responsibility for our own and others' mental health and wellbeing.
- Need to be able to develop the understanding and gain the skills so that we can recognise signs of mental ill health in others and ourselves.
- Need to be able to access services easily that will support recovery and empowerment, leading to the promotion of independence and to the facilitation of self-management and maintenance of mental health and wellbeing.

As members of society, the people of Wales must accept responsibility within their own communities, workplaces and families to address those relationship issues that impact on all aspects of our day-to-day lives.

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What is the Wales Mental Health in Primary Care Network going to do?

“Gold Standards of Care for Primary Care Mental Health in Wales”

In response to this call to action, the Wales Mental Health in Primary Care (WaMH in PC) Network is drawing up a Gold Standards Framework for Primary Care Mental Health in Wales. The initiative at this stage is unique to Wales and its primary care mental health services; the motivation behind its development is to halt the current poor profile of mental health and thus enable general practices and primary care services to have a sound and effective framework for commissioning and providing services. The Gold Standards Framework is about achieving consistent standards of care and it is committed to leading the continuous improvement in health and wellbeing through prevention, support and treatment to ensure recovery and the maintenance of wellbeing.

We call upon others to work with us (WaMH in PC) to promote

- The mental health and general wellbeing of all the people of Wales
- Recovery through services that have the appropriate values and evidence base.
- Research and development that will be directed towards providing the evidence base for mental health and wellbeing.

- Good practice by engaging with individuals and their carers, as they are central to the relationship between service providers and themselves in setting and shaping the services they require. This will be achieved through partnership, empowerment and personal responsibility.
- Person-centred approaches that acknowledge and value individuals as people and give proper recognition to the therapeutic potential of these interactions and relationships.

We must work to gain the understanding, support and recognition of these Gold Standards by our communities and colleagues. The Standards will succeed only if the community adopts them. They will need to build on the policies of the Welsh Assembly Government and recognise the important initiatives that already exist in Wales

All this will need new ways of thinking and working, both inside and outside our health services. We are committed to the actions contained in this declaration.

We call upon local and national government, health services, industry and business, the voluntary sector, schools and educational establishments and others in Wales, to join with this initiative and sign up now to this Declaration.

1. *St Vincent Declaration. Diabetes mellitus in Europe: A problem at all ages in all countries and IDF. Saint Vincent, Italy, October 1989*
2. *Mental Health Declaration for Europe. Facing the Challenges, Building Solutions. WHO. Helsinki, Finland. January 2005*
3. *Designed for Life. Creating world class Health and Social Care for Wales in the 21st Century. Welsh Assembly Government. May 2005*
4. *Health Acorn Report CACI & TNS January 2007*
5. *Better Health, Better Wales, Welsh Office, May 1998*

Wales Mental Health in Primary Care Network (WaMH in PC)

February 2007

If you are willing to join with this initiative and would like to sign up to this Declaration, please complete this form **(in block capitals please)** and return to:

Welsh Declaration for Mental Health and Well-Being c/o RCGP Wales FREEPOST SWC3779 Cardiff CF10 4GZ

I wish to join this initiative	<i>(signature please)</i>
Dr / Mr / Mrs / Ms / Other	<i>(please circle)</i>
First Name:	
Surname:	
Job Title:	
Department:	
Organisation:	

Alternatively, you can sign up via our website at www.wamhipc.org.uk (please send any queries to welshc@rcgp.org.uk).

<p>MY PLEDGE TO TAKE ACTION</p> <p><i>(please complete if you are in a position to do so) :</i></p>
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I intend to demonstrate my commitment to the Declaration by taking action that will promote the aims of the 'Gold Standards' initiative -

I will take action(s) to promote:

DECLARATION'S MAIN AIMS (please see previous pages 2 & 3)	please tick as relevant
<input type="checkbox"/> the mental health and general well-being of people with whom I have contact	
<input type="checkbox"/> recovery	
<input type="checkbox"/> research and development	
<input type="checkbox"/> engagement with individuals who receive services, and their carers	
<input type="checkbox"/> the use of person-centred approaches	

My action(s): (please describe and provide a date (in the 2nd column) by which achievement is being planned):

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I will take these actions on behalf of: (please tick relevant box)

- myself, acting as an individual;	
- the team or department in which I am active;	
- the whole Organisation in which I have a leading role	