

Mental Health Action Plan – Implementation Update

June 2021

Introduction

1. The New Decade, New Approach document contained an action to deliver and support a Mental Health Action Plan and new Mental Health Strategy.
2. The [Mental Health Action Plan](#) was published on 19 May 2020 and marked the beginning of reform of mental health services in Northern Ireland. Containing 38 actions, it was intended to be a short term measure that would provide a focused basis for decision making, enable the implementation of immediate service improvements and set the foundations for the Mental Health Strategy.
3. The Action Plan also included a COVID-19 Mental Health Response Plan. The Response Plan outlined seven key areas where action was being taken to prepare for, minimise and mitigate the impact of the pandemic on mental health, including the impact of social restrictions and the first lockdown.
4. A Mental Health Strategic Reform Board was established by the Department in order to provide governance oversight for implementation of the Action Plan and development of the Mental Health Strategy. Membership includes representatives from the Department, Health and Social Care Board, the interim Mental Health Champion, Voluntary and Community sector, and service users and carers.
5. This report provides a high-level progress update on the implementation of the Action Plan over the 12 month period since its publication. It also provides an opportunity to highlight some examples of notable achievements and positive impacts flowing from its implementation.

Implementation Progress

6. In overall terms, good progress has been made, with most actions either (i) complete; (ii) on target; or (iii) progressing with slight delays. The current position on each of the 38 actions is summarised in **Annex A** and as follows:
 - 8 actions are noted as complete;
 - 6 actions are RAG rated as Green – ongoing and/or on target for completion as intended;
 - 8 actions are RAG rated as Amber – ongoing and/or on target for completion with some delays;
 - 0 actions are RAG rated as Red – at risk of not being actioned;
 - 15 actions are ongoing or on target, but are of such importance that they are being carried forward to the new Mental Health Strategy; and
 - 1 action is not progressing on the basis it is not cost efficient.

7. Delays in implementation of specific actions have been largely due to COVID-19 related pressures. The impact of the pandemic on routine business has been significant and, to that end, it has been necessary to exercise a degree of flexibility regarding the implementation timescales detailed in the Plan.

8. There are also a number of key actions (some of which are ongoing) for which, due to their importance and significance, will be taken forward through the Mental Health Strategy going forward. These actions are identified by purple shading in the attached **Annex A**.

9. Looking forward, and in the context of the constrained financial context facing the Department, funding for the Action Plan remains a significant challenge. In that context, it will be necessary to secure additional funding to continue with the implementation of the Action Plan and ultimately, the new Mental Health Strategy.

Key Highlights

10. A number of reviews of key services were commissioned as part of the Mental Health Action Plan, with a view to guiding future policy direction and future service development. These include reviews of:

- Restraint and Seclusion;
- Transitions from CAMHS to Adult Mental Health services;
- Crisis Services;
- Eating Disorder Services;
- Personality Disorder Services;
- Psychiatric Low Secure Services; and
- Mental Health Rehabilitation Services.

11. Further details on each review are contained in **Annex B**.

12. The outworking of these reviews will help inform future strategic policy, and the completion of these actions represents a significant step forward for mental health in Northern Ireland.

'Still Waiting' Action Plan (Action 1.3)

13. The Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) published '*Still Waiting – A Rights Based Review of Mental Health Services and Support for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland*' on 27 September 2018. The report made 50 recommendations covering a range of aspects of mental health services and support for children and young people, based on evidence provided to NICCY by young people with experience of the services.

14. On 10 October 2019, the Department published a draft Action Plan in response to the agreed recommendations of the NICCY's Still Waiting report. The Mental

Health Action Plan included a commitment to implement the Still Waiting Action Plan.

15. Some of the key progress developments from the Action Plan include:

- The Department has set up a cross departmental/sectoral Project Board to monitor and have strategic oversight of the Still Waiting Action Plan.
- The Department has worked collaboratively with the Department of Education on the development of the Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing in Education Framework. Launched in February 2021, the Framework provides overarching guidelines to support those working in educational settings to help them promote emotional wellbeing, strengthen self-esteem and resilience in our children and young people and effectively respond to presenting needs when required. Notable health related actions in the plan include the planned rollout of CAMHS Emotional Wellbeing Teams in Schools and the expansion of the existing RISE NI service to KS2.
- A Managed Care Network for acute CAMHS is being created (see below).
- The first prevalence study of children and young people's mental health in Northern Ireland was completed in March 2020.
- An audit has taken place within HSC to look at prescriptions levels for children and young people.

16. The Department is currently working with CAMHS and relevant stakeholders to review the Action Plan and ensure it takes into account new developments, such as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the development of the new 10 year Mental Health Strategy.

Managed Care Networks (Action 6.2)

17. The Action Plan undertook to create Managed Care Networks (MCNs) for CAMHS and forensic mental health, including consideration of a regional forensic service.

CAMHS Managed Care Network

Approximately £200k was dedicated to taking forward the MCN for acute CAMHS and plans to establish the MCN are currently being finalised. It is expected that once established, the MCN will be well placed to drive progress in CAMHS service development, planning and strategic priorities for the future.

To date, a regional co-ordinator was appointed in March 2021 and a part time Clinical Director is in the process of being recruited. This network will review acute resources and ensure consistency of treatment and care across the region.

Establishment of the MCN will enable clinical expertise to be shared across the region, particularly in response to children and young people in crisis, resulting in improved and more tailored care for the young person with a more coordinated approach to transition and discharge planning, working with other key service interfaces to ensure better mental health outcomes for our children and young people.

Forensic Managed Care Network

Multiple stakeholders across the Health and Social Care system and the Department of Justice, together with partners in Scotland and the Republic of Ireland, have been engaging since 2018 to build the foundation for a Regional Forensic MCN for Northern Ireland.

Funding was allocated in April 2021 to recruit a Forensic Network Manager and associated support staff, with the aim of further improving this partnership working, strengthening strategic oversight and accountability and co-producing regionally consistent, accessible, acceptable and effective models/standards of

care for people who require Mental Health and Intellectual Developmental Disability Forensic Services.

Regional and multi-agency operational and clinical standards, an outcomes delivery plan, research strategy, training and education strategy and a business case to address the need for Low Secure Forensic Mental Health Services in Northern Ireland will be progressed in 2021/22 in line with the Mental Health Action plan and objectives of the Mental Health Strategy and the Improving Health within Criminal Justice Action Plan.

Perinatal Mental Health Services (Action 9.1)

18. The Action Plan contained a commitment to consider a business case for perinatal mental health services and to agree a new service model for specialist perinatal mental health services.
19. In January 2021, funding of £4m was approved for the development of perinatal services for Northern Ireland. This investment reflects the commitment to improve perinatal mental health services and allows the Public Health Agency to develop and implement new multidisciplinary community perinatal teams in each of the five Health and Social Care Trusts.
20. A regional team, and a new stepped care model, will ensure regional consistency. The community teams will provide vital wrap around care for new and expectant mothers in the perinatal period experiencing mental health conditions, and will ensure the best possible health outcomes for both them and their infants.
21. The Public Health Agency is leading work on the roll out of the new service and it is anticipated that the new service will begin partial delivery later this year.

Mental Health Innovation Fund (Action 12.2)

22. The Action Plan provided for a Mental Health Innovation Fund that was designed to support local level initiatives with an identifiable benefit to local mental health services, users, carers or staff.
23. Some £450k was allocated to the HSC Trusts for a wide range of projects. The Fund was considered a great success, receiving positive support from stakeholders and providing real improvements to the lives of people using mental health services.
24. Some examples of the positive impact of supported initiatives are provided in **Annex C**.

Conclusion

25. Despite the hugely challenging and unprecedented operating environment over the last 12 months, with progress being slowed in some areas by the emergency response to the pandemic, there has been significant, positive progress in implementing the Mental Health Action Plan.
26. Work on ongoing actions will continue, subject to funding, and moving forward, many of the structures, frameworks and foundations developed and introduced through the Action Plan will become embedded as business as usual.
27. For others, the Mental Health Strategy will supersede the Action Plan as the primary vehicle for their delivery going forward. It is therefore anticipated that the launch of the Mental Health Strategy would provide the opportunity to formally close the Action Plan, with an undertaking that a formal evaluation be carried out at the appropriate time.

UPDATE ON MENTAL HEALTH ACTION PLAN ACTIONS

	Action complete
	On track for completion within predetermined timescales
	Ongoing (with some delays)
	Unlikely to complete within predetermined timescales
	Superseded by and subsumed within Mental Health Strategy workstream
	Work not proceeding

No	Action	Rating	Comments
1.1	Mental Health Strategy		Mental Health Strategy on target for publication in summer 2021.
1.2	Prepare for strategy		Some delays in publishing the Bamford Evaluation Report and in the evaluation of the psychological therapies strategy.
1.3	Implement NICCY Action Plan		Work is ongoing to oversee and monitor the progress of the action plan.
2.1	10 year funding plan		On target for publication alongside the Mental Health Strategy.
3.1	Mental Health Champion		Mental Health Champion post and supporting office created. Interim Champion appointed in June 2020. Recruitment process to appoint a permanent Champion at an advanced stage. Work of Champion will continue going forward as 'business as usual'.
4.1	Service map		Deloitte commissioned to undertake review. Final report provided to the Department in March 2021.
5.1	Embed coproduction		Stakeholder networks are building across Carers Groups, Statutory and Community and Voluntary mental health services and specialist groups. Broad areas for engagement identified from draft Strategy and initial engagement held through membership. Barriers to, and methods of, engagement to promote participation have been identified, with a range of engagement options to facilitate and embed co-production.
5.2	Regional SU structures		Bamford Monitoring Group reconstitution complete.
6.1	Mental Capacity Act		Work ongoing on implementation planning.
6.2	Create managed care networks		Both CAMHS and Forensic Managed Care Networks established.
6.3	Implement pathways		Going forward the Mental Health Strategy will be the primary vehicle for the delivery of this work through plans for a regional mental health services

6.4	Review of suicide, homicide and deaths		Ongoing. Difficulties securing external resource to undertake review regarding provision of pastoral support for those affected by suicide, death and homicide of those known to mental health services. Going forward regional service structures will provide mechanism for sharing and implementation of learning flowing from SAIs.
6.5	Review of restraint and seclusion		Ongoing.
7.1	Improve transitions		Embedded in the Strategy.
7.2	Introduce mental health passports		Going forward the MH Strategy will provide an alternative solution for implementation of this action.
8.1	Urgent and Emergency Care		
8.2	Review crisis services		Ongoing.
9.1	Perinatal mental health		Business case approved and £4.7m funding secured for the development of a specialist perinatal mental health community service model.
9.2	Review Specialist Services		Complete - future policy direction in MH Strategy.
9.3	Review low secure and rehab		Complete - future policy direction in MH Strategy.
9.4	Implement Regional Trauma Network		Progress on implementation of the Regional Trauma Network has been delayed due to the emergency Covid-19 pandemic taking priority. Next steps on implementation are currently being considered and it is anticipated that further progress can be made during 2021.
10.1	Training in Primary Care		Going forward the MH Strategy will be the primary vehicle for implementation of this work.
10.2	Support primary care MDT		Going forward the MH Strategy will be the primary vehicle for implementation of this work.
10.3	Expand availability of hubs		Going forward the MH Strategy will be the primary vehicle for implementation of this work.
10.4	Integrated hubs and primary care		Going forward the MH Strategy will be the primary vehicle for implementation of this work.
11.1	Review documentation		Going forward the MH Strategy will be the primary vehicle for implementation of this work.

12.1	Integrate coproduction		Engagement with NHSCT and QUB on Dual Diagnosis Conference with resultant plan to engage stakeholders to inform and influence service changes in this area. Scoping work on role of Peer Support Workers underway and planning initial engagement sessions to provide an evidence-base for the role of Peer Support Worker, feeding in to workforce planning and development and working to ensure regional consistency / equity and gaps across specialist areas. PCC representation on Think Family NI project group and Forensic Managed Care Network group with the aim of developing networks and engagement to influence regionality and planned work in these areas as it occurs.
12.2	Innovation Fund		Complete - Fund used in 20/21 and implemented as part of normal business going forward.
13.1	Workforce review		Going forward the MH Strategy will be the primary vehicle for implementation of this work.
13.2	Peer support review		Going forward the MH Strategy will be the primary vehicle for implementation of this work.
13.3	New ways of working for the workforce		Going forward the MH Strategy will be the primary vehicle for implementation of this work.
14.1	Review governance structure		Ongoing.
15.1	Outcomes framework		Going forward the MH Strategy will be the primary vehicle for implementation of this work.
15.2	Prevalence study		Not proceeding.
16.1	Structures for regional commissioning		Going forward the MH Strategy will be the primary vehicle for implementation of this work.
16.2	Structures for bed management		Closed.
17.1	Review involvement of C&V sector		Going forward the MH Strategy will be the primary vehicle for implementation of this work.
17.2	Improved use of technology		Going forward the MH Strategy will be the primary vehicle for the ongoing implementation of this work.

SUMMARY OF SERVICE REVIEWS

Action/ Review	Key Points
Action 6.5 - Review of restraint and seclusion.	<p>The project objective was to review the current use of restrictive interventions, restraint and seclusion in health and social care settings and any local governance arrangements and to produce a regional policy document governing the use of seclusion, restraint and restrictive interventions and a supporting regional operational procedure for the use of seclusion.</p> <p>A 'Use of Restraint, Seclusion and Restrictive Interventions Policy' and 'Regional Guidance Document on the Use of Seclusion' have subsequently been developed and are currently being considered by officials.</p>
Action 7.1 Improve transitions in mental health services - Consider a new model for CAMHS to smooth transitions when a child turns 18 subject	<p>A working group was established to: conduct a time-bound review of existing arrangements for transitions; consider a number of defined options for a future model and approach; make recommendations as to a future model; and outline key steps required to implement any preferred option.</p> <p>The working group submitted its final report to the Department in April 2021. Officials are currently considering the report's recommendations and potential next steps, including the need to formally consult on proposals.</p>
Action 8.2 - Reconfigure mental health crisis services	<p>An externally-led working group was established to review and make recommendations for mental health crisis service provision in Northern Ireland. The intention was to reduce the number of people attending Emergency Departments in a mental health crisis and to provide an improved mental health crisis response.</p> <p>The review team has provided its report which makes 15 recommendations for the further development of mental health crisis services in Northern Ireland. The report recommendations and next steps are currently being considered by officials.</p>
Action 9.2 - Review eating disorder services to provide a new service model for specialist eating disorder mental health services	<p>Options for improving eating disorder service provision across Northern Ireland have been examined by HSCB through the Regional Eating Disorders Network Group (REDNG).</p> <p>The REDNG paper identified that the provision of specialist eating disorder services in Northern Ireland should centre on optimising community based services and, in addition, consider optimising the ability of local mental health/acute medical wards and paediatric in-patient facilities to treat eating disorders</p> <p>The paper has been accepted as the future model for eating disorder services in Northern Ireland. A more detailed consideration of costs and best value of service provision will be commissioned and progressed through a business case process.</p>

Action/ Review	Key Points
<p>Action 9.2 - Review of current personality disorder services to evaluate effectiveness, identify gaps and make recommendations for future service developments.</p>	<p>An external review was commissioned by the Department and the final report was received in April 2021.</p> <p>The review has been accepted as the future model for personality disorder services in Northern Ireland. The previous personality disorder strategy from 2010 has been formally closed, and the new policy direction will form an action in the new Mental Health Strategy. A more detailed consideration of costs and best value of service provision will be commissioned and progressed through a business case process.</p>
<p>Action 9.3 - Consider model for low secure services and develop concrete proposals</p>	<p>Proposals for psychiatric low secure provisions in Northern Ireland was submitted to the Department in February 2021.</p> <p>The proposals has been accepted as the future model for psychiatric low secure services in Northern Ireland. The position will be reflected in the published Mental Health Strategy 2021–31. Options and associated costs will now be subject to more detailed consideration through a formal business case process.</p>
<p>Action 9.3 - Consider model for rehabilitation services and develop concrete proposals</p>	<p>A review of the future commissioning needs of regional rehabilitation services was carried out and a high-level briefing paper was developed. The paper proposes a phased approach to the development of a 'fit for purpose' infrastructure to include a mix of hospital and community provision.</p> <p>The proposals has been accepted as the future model for mental health rehabilitation services in Northern Ireland. The position will be reflected in the published Mental Health Strategy 2021–31. Options and associated costs will now be subject to more detailed consideration through a formal business case process.</p>

EXAMPLES OF MENTAL HEALTH INNOVATION FUND INITIATIVES

Trust	Initiative
Southern HSC Trust	<p><i>SHSCT Community Additions Service Courtyard Garden Project</i></p> <p>Designed to develop and deliver therapeutic interventions in recovery from addiction through physical and recreational activities with nature and outdoors.</p> <p>First group programme week beginning 18 May 2021 - 'Sow and Grow' - incorporating the Five Steps of Wellness with gardening activities, also in collaboration with Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council 'Grow It' programme.</p>
	<p><i>Forensic Day Opportunities - Alpacas and Alpaca House</i></p> <p>Funds were provided for purchase of alpacas and creation of an alpaca house. Service Users have a sense of achievement from completing building of the Alpaca House. Alpacas are providing therapeutic value to Service Users.</p>
Western HSC Trust	<p><i>The purchase of Portland Chair Beds, TVs and suitable furniture for Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU)</i></p> <p>The Portland chair beds are used as escalation beds and are operational within the acute adult mental health wards when the commissioned beds are at full capacity. The addition of the Portland chair has benefited the patient greatly as prior to this the alternative was a mattress on the floor or the use of the ward sofa.</p> <p>Additional TVs within the ward environment has allowed patients greater variety of what they want to watch. Additionally the Smart technology TVs have enhanced virtual visiting and streaming of courses that are suitable for the needs of the patient group from places like the recovery college.</p> <p>Suitable furniture for PICU - such as bean bags - is safe to use within this facility and assists the patient when distressed to help them relax in a soothing and comfortable way.</p>
	<p><i>New gym equipment</i></p> <p>When cleared medically fit, clients have availed of this equipment at times of heightened anxiety and/or increase in cravings for substances, as a means of a distraction technique. They have also availed of it as a means of moving forward and developing new interests/hobbies post discharge. Clients are being encouraged to avail of the equipment from a health benefit avenue ie making healthy choice and the importance of exercise re weight control, mental health and wellbeing and sleep hygiene.</p>
	<p><i>Purchase of summerhouse for The Arden Centre</i></p> <p>The summerhouse has enabled clients to meet safely in accordance with COVID guidelines. It also supports the 'Take 5' programme.</p>

Trust	Initiative
	<p>1. Connecting with others safely in these times, 2. Be active -gardening, 3. Outdoor exercising, 4. Keep learning, outdoor classes, 5. Give and Take Notice e.g. mindfulness sessions.</p> <p><i>Supply of art panels and photographic workshop</i></p> <p>Occupational Therapy has benefited from the mental health innovation fund by facilitating art classes and photography classes for clients. It is reported that clients found these activities to be 'extremely enjoyable'.</p>
South Eastern HSC Trust	<p><i>Purchase of iPads to enable remote/virtual working</i></p> <p>Designed to help improve the health and safety of staff when engaging in virtual meetings/appointments and or having to work remotely. Access to this equipment allows continued service delivery in the rebuild from COVID by promoting social distancing opportunities. It also promotes improved visual quality when engaging with service users/carers via a virtual platform.</p> <p><i>Supported Living – IT equipment</i></p> <p>Purchase of IT equipment for service users who did not have the necessary equipment to access the virtual groups/training as day services closed during the lockdown due to COVID. This also enabled people to stay connected to their social networks and supported the families in home schooling. This package also provided individuals' training, setup and maintenance of equipment.</p>