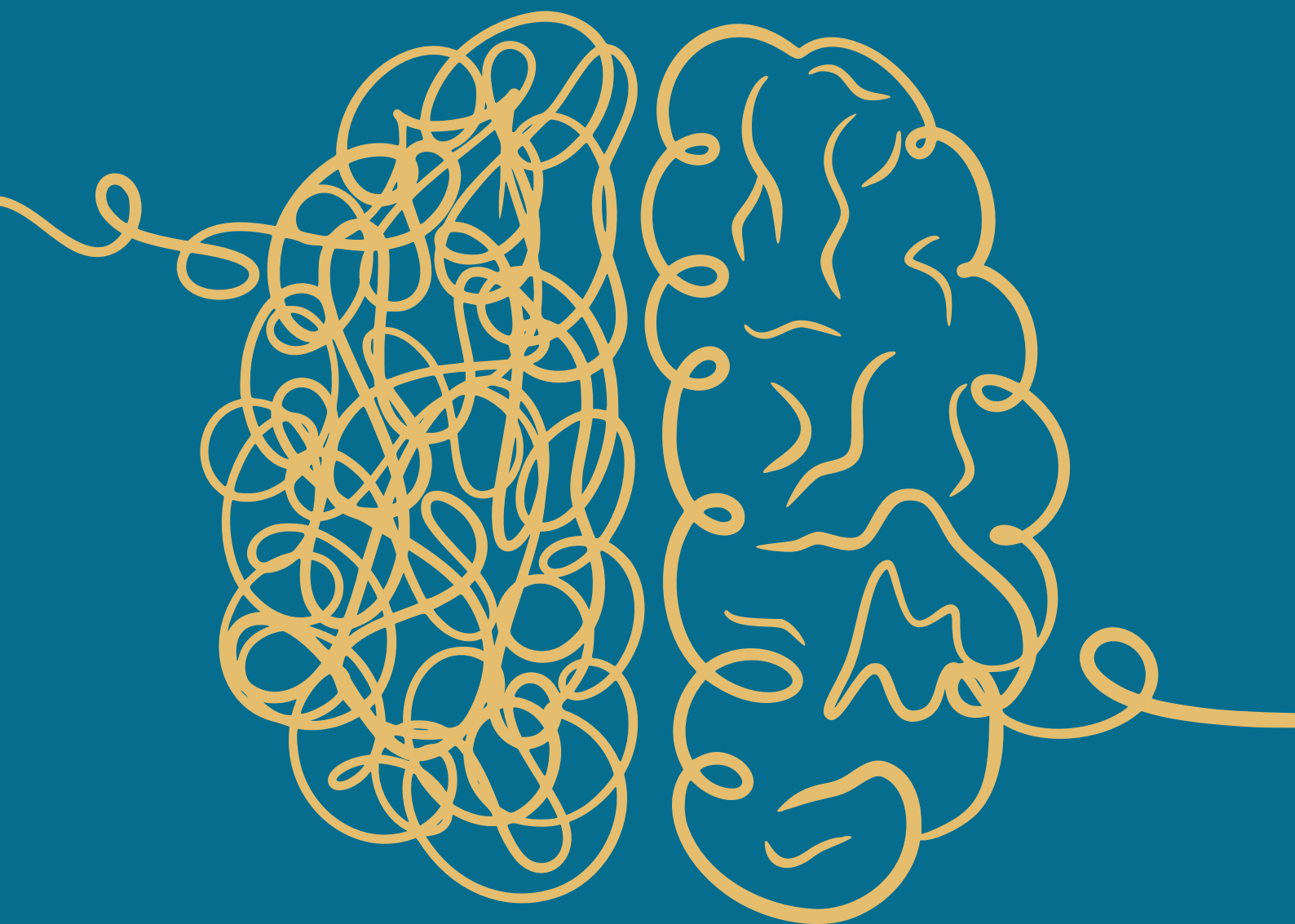




2026 Senedd Election: A Manifesto for the Future of Mental Health Care in Wales





Introduction

The Royal College of Psychiatrists Wales (RCPsych Wales) is the professional medical body responsible for supporting psychiatrists. We work to secure the best outcomes for people with mental illness, intellectual disabilities and developmental disorders by promoting excellent mental health services, supporting the prevention of mental illness, training outstanding psychiatrists, promoting quality and research, and setting standards.

We are the voice of our members and the profession, representing more than 600 consultant and trainee psychiatrists working in Wales. We are proud of the effective partnerships we have developed in recent years with the Welsh Government, Senedd Members and other stakeholders and look forward to further developing these in years to come.

The next Senedd term represents a pivotal moment for the future landscape of mental health in Wales, building on the new Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy and overdue reforms to legislation. We are calling on all political parties to clearly prioritise mental health in their manifestos by committing to taking actions in the short-, medium- and long-term.

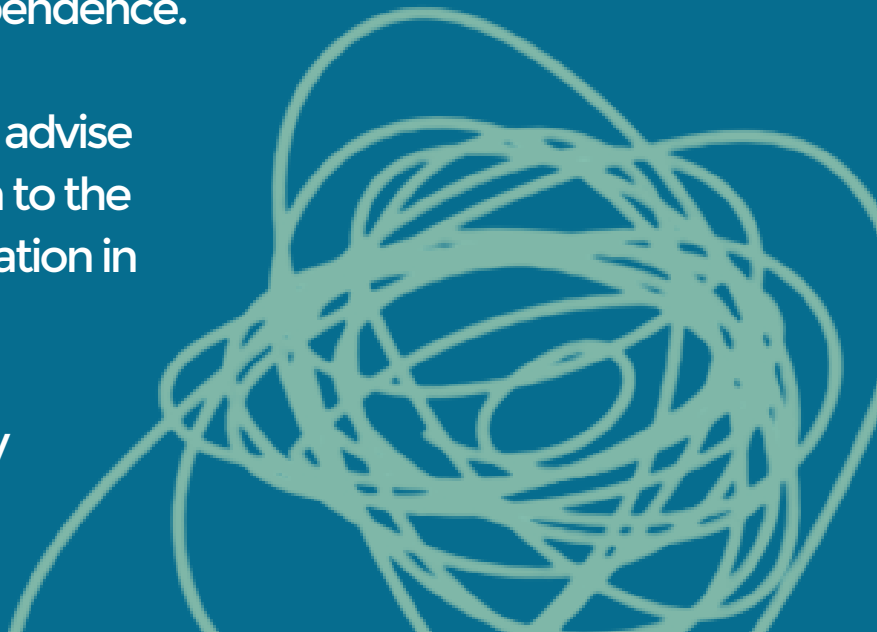
This document sets out 4 focus areas and 15 priorities to support the next Welsh Government in making realistic and ambitious improvements to the delivery of mental health care in Wales.



Focus Area 1: Patients

RCPsych Wales calls on the next Welsh Government to:

1. Commit to an ambitious target that no individual should have to travel outside of Wales to access specialist mental health treatment by the end of the next Senedd term.
2. Put in place an interim 'Access to Care Fund' to support patients and their families with the cost of travel, food and away-from-home accommodation associated with out of area treatment and admissions to regional inpatient units.
3. Set standards and issue guidance to ensure that no mental health patient leaves an inpatient setting in worse physical health than when they entered.
4. Ensure that Welsh speaking mental health patients can access timely and accurate diagnosis and treatment in their preferred language by reinvigorating the 'Active Offer' and embedding linguistic skills in workforce planning.
5. Work with local authorities to reverse the decline in learning disability day centres which offer opportunities for socialisation, support skills development and promote independence.
6. Establish an Oversight Board to advise and provide assurances in relation to the mental health of the prison population in Wales, both under the current constitutional settlement and as justice functions are incrementally devolved.

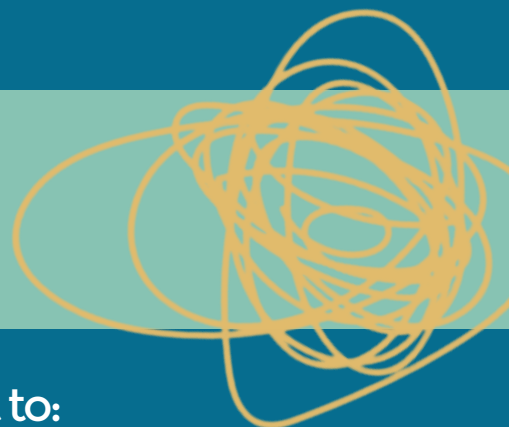


Focus Area 2: Workforce

RCPsych Wales calls on the next Welsh Government to:

7. Prioritise the mental health and wellbeing of psychiatrists by improving awareness of available resources and incorporating interventions, such as peer support and reflective practice, into medical training and employment contracts.
8. Develop a dedicated action plan for psychiatry in Wales to address shortages in the workforce, meet the rising and increasingly complex demand for mental health services, and the changing nature of the psychiatric profession in light of new treatments and legislative reforms.
9. Maximise the professional competencies of the workforce by enabling psychiatrists to work safely and effectively at the top of their licence, particularly in Tier 4 inpatient settings.

Focus Area 3: Health Boards



RCPsych Wales calls on the next Welsh Government to:

10. Amend the membership of Local Health Boards to include psychiatrists as executive officers with responsibility for mental health, thereby establishing appropriate medical leadership, accountability and governance.
11. Increase and expand specialist capacity to meet growing demand and tackle long waiting lists, drawing on the professional expertise of the College, particularly in relation to neurodevelopmental services.
12. Use data on health outcomes and lived experiences to inform more equitable commissioning of services and support provision, including in relation to mental health, substance misuse, dementia, intellectual disability, and other vulnerable groups.

Focus Area 4: Digital and Research

RCPsych Wales calls on the next Welsh Government to:

13. Invest in a world-leading national approach to digitise the Mental Health Act, thereby increasing productivity, enhancing efficiencies and improving the experience for both patients and clinicians.

14. Equitably fund and prioritise mental health research and data collection to improve understanding, facilitate innovation and build academic capacity in the mental health workforce.

15. Commission and routinely update a Severe and Enduring Mental Illness Profile for Wales to support an intelligence-driven approach to service design and delivery, informed by lived experience.

Get in Touch

For further information or questions, please contact:

Dafydd Huw

RCPsych Wales Policy and Public Affairs Manager

dafydd.huw@rcpsych.ac.uk

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/cymru

