



# **RCPsych Wales** **Senedd / Welsh** **Parliament Election.**

On Thursday the 6th of May, the people of Wales elected 60 members of the Senedd. This in turn determined who will form the next Welsh Government. Labour remains the largest party, winning 30 seats. It has been in power in Wales - either in coalition or as a minority - for the past 22 years. Welsh Conservatives celebrated its best ever Senedd election, winning 16 seats. Plaid Cymru had a disappointing two days, winning only 13 seats in the Senedd and losing key constituencies like Rhondda. The Liberal Democrats lost its only constituency seat, one it has had since 1999, but picked up one on a list.

Each major political party in Wales is standing on a strong platform of parity and increased investment for mental health services, and each party manifesto reflects the culmination of significant efforts from the team in Wales to inform the agenda.

We launched our own manifesto, '**Good Mental Health for Wales**' in late 2019 which sets out our calls to the next Welsh Government.

Members played a crucial role in shaping our manifesto recommendations and they provided expert evidence and proposed ideas through our executive committee, faculty meetings and by contacting and meeting with us directly.

Last year, our political engagement around our manifesto took the form of direct meetings with senior politicians and party researchers, as well as dedicated roundtable discussions with party representatives. In Autumn 2020, we started a second round of engagement, which included meeting with party health spokespeople, writing to all manifesto writers and party candidates and meeting with the Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing. Members also represented us at meetings with politicians, including at cross party groups. They also provided their expert evidence at Senedd committee evidence sessions.

Establishing our view at this earliest of stages was consciously planned, and enabled us to also influence and inform the last iteration of Welsh Government's existing long term strategy for mental health 'Together for Mental Health' 2019/2022.

**This report highlights the outcomes of our engagement activity over the last 18 months, by introducing the highlights from Welsh Government's published mental health strategy and the commitments made by Welsh political parties in the run up to the election.**

## Together for Mental Health (2019-2022)

Early in 2020, we welcomed the publication of Welsh Governments last iteration of the Together for Mental Health strategy. The plan was reissued in response to Covid.

The delivery plan committed to several areas where the College had lobbied for increased investment and focus. Highlighting just a few selected areas:

- Support to increase adoption to the RCPsych Wales endorsed Diverse Cymru Cultural Competency Toolkit.
- HEIW and SCW to develop a workforce plan for mental health in Wales.
- Extension of the Nurse Staffing Levels (Wales) Act 2016 to adult inpatient mental health settings.
- Formation of the Wolfson Centre for Mental Health to strengthen existing partnerships and rapidly translate new research into practice thereby improving the mental health and well-being of young people.
- Development of the evidence based All Wales Traumatic Stress Quality Improvement Initiative for all ages, taking into account other specific population groups including victims of sexual assault, perinatal mental health, refugees, asylum seekers, people in prison or in contact with criminal justice system and other vulnerable groups.
- Establishing a specialist in-patient perinatal mother and baby unit in Wales, and ensuring all community perinatal mental health teams adhere to the College standards.
- Implementing standards for prison mental health in partnership with the College.

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It's incredibly rewarding to see that political parties have overwhelmingly understood and adopted the headline message of parity for mental health with physical health, as well as the need for timely access to the right services.

Commitments have been made to address historic workforce shortages and the deficit in investment into mental health services.

In this short report, we've highlighted the headline priorities and commitments from the main political parties who have engaged with the College throughout the process of shaping manifestos.

**Now that we know the outcome of the election, we'll work with the Welsh Government to ensure delivery on key commitments in delivering good mental health for Wales.**

'Good Mental Health for Wales'  
[rcpsych.ac.uk/manifesto](https://rcpsych.ac.uk/manifesto)

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The Royal College of Psychiatrists Wales is calling for **parity** between mental and physical health services, with timely access to the **right services** in the **right place** and communities working together to reduce poor mental health

full details on all individual recommendations are available through the above link

## Welsh Labour

We were particularly pleased to see that Welsh Labour has committed to **prioritising investment in mental health services to help with long-term recovery from the pandemic.**

Through this, they'll invest in the workforce and will promote a **no-wrong door approach to mental health.** These are all things that we have called for in our manifesto and in our subsequent Covid recovery work.

Welsh Labour has also committed to a number of other recommendations outlined in our manifesto, including the **creation of a medical school in North Wales** and an **increase in training funding by 8% in 2021 and over the next five years, training 12,000 doctors, nurses and health professionals.**

In our manifesto we also called for the next Welsh Government to map the current available options for social prescribing in different areas of Wales,

and undertake work to ensure that medical professionals, including GPs understand the options that are available.

We were pleased to see that Welsh Labour have now committed in their manifesto to the introduction of an **all-Wales framework to roll out social prescribing;** they've also committed to maintain free prescriptions throughout the NHS.

Additionally, Welsh Labour would look to fund NHS services to recover and **provide the delayed treatments people are waiting for.**

We also support the commitment to invest in and **roll-out new technology** that supports fast and effective advice and treatments, this has been a focus for our Covid recovery work.

**[Full details for the Welsh Labour manifesto 'Moving Wales Forward'.](#)**



## Welsh Liberal Democrats

We are also pleased to see that the Liberal Democrats have included our exact wording around a number of their own recommendations.

These include commitments to:

- **Increasing the share of funding** for mental health and learning disability services to **13% of all NHS spend by 2028**
- Improving access and choice in psychological therapies
- Extending the **Nurse Staffing Levels Act** to cover **mental health inpatient, children's wards, and community ward settings**, as well as explore the possibility for similar measures in other parts of our health system.

We also welcome the focus on **reducing inappropriate out of area placements**, the Welsh Liberal Democrats would look to introduce identified targets that would reduce the need for children to be sent far from home.

The Welsh Liberal Democrats have also committed to provide **24/7 mental health crisis care**, and **reduce waiting times for services**.

We welcome the commitment to pass a **clean air act** in the first 100 days to tackle dirty air and the poor health outcomes it causes - this is something we have actively lobbied for in this term of government.

Full details for the Welsh Liberal Democrat manifesto ['Put Recovery First'](#).





## Plaid Cymru

Plaid Cymru's 2021 election manifesto also makes a number of commitments for mental health which are included as priority areas in our own manifesto, including providing **6,000 extra healthcare professionals for Wales - 4,000 nurses, 1000 doctors and 1000 allied health professionals.**

We also welcome the commitment to **increasing the resources** allocated to mental and emotional health **year on year over the course of the next five years.**

We are also supportive of Plaid Cymru's commitment to **invest in child and adolescent mental health services**, and their commitment to include the rehabilitation and treatment of those with eating disorders in mental health provision.

Plaid Cymru have committed to extending the standardised approach to specialist perinatal mental health services, establishing **an additional mother and baby unit in North Wales.** This is an area of focus that the College has been heavily involved with.

Elsewhere, Plaid Cymru have also committed to establishing a **network of Youth Wellbeing Centres** for mental and physical health support for young people who are not ill enough to require advanced psychiatric treatment, yet need help.

They'll also invest in school nursing and ensure counselling is available in primary care and that GPs have access to resources locally to direct people appropriately.

Full details for the Plaid Cymru manifesto '[Let us face the future together](#)'

## Welsh Conservatives

We were pleased to see a commitment to **increasing spending on mental health** and wellbeing services in real terms in **each and every year** of the next Welsh Parliament.

Further commitments have been made to provide extra funding to the NHS every year, **with 3,000 more nurses and 1,200 doctors by 2026.**

We welcome the commitment to transform mental health by treating it with the **same priority as physical health**, this has been a basis for our manifesto.

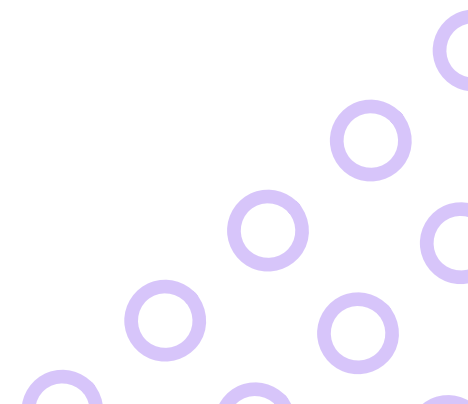
We also welcome the Welsh Conservatives' commitment to creating a **mother and baby unit in North Wales**, their commitment to establishing an **NHS Gambling Addiction Service** and to establishing targets for waiting times on specialist services.

Elsewhere, Welsh Conservatives will seek to create a **network of mental health crisis centres.**

They'll look to increase the capacity of mental health services for children and young people to prevent placements at great distances from their loved ones.

Additionally, they'll introduce a Welsh NHS Covenant to **guarantee increased investment** and support for the NHS for the future.

[Full details for the Welsh Conservative manifesto 'A plan for recovery & change'](#)



## Wales Green Party

The Wales Green Party have identified how the pandemic has exposed the **deep health inequalities within our society** and highlighted the scale of our reliance on a dangerously overstretched NHS.

We have worked closely with other Royal Colleges to highlight pre-existing and current inequalities within mental health, further exacerbated by Covid, and welcome this acknowledgement.

They have reinforced a commitment to safeguard the NHS as a free at the point of delivery, publicly funded body, and ensuring that **health boards and local authorities have the funding needed to increase capacity across all areas of health and social care provision.**

The Wales Green Party will ensure neighbourhood access to all **treatments that can be made available locally**, and the provision of social support for disabled people, older people and their carers will be given early and quickly.

Elsewhere, The Wales Green Party will look to increase funding for areas of the NHS heavily relied on by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer and Asexual (LGBTIQA+) people, including trans healthcare, HIV treatment and mental health provision.

[Full details for the Wales Green Party manifesto 'Transform Wales'](#)



## **Propel Wales**

[The Contract with Wales](#)

## **UKIP Wales**

[Wales Forever, Britain Together](#)

## **Communist Party**

[Real Power for the People of Wales](#)

## **Freedom Alliance**

[Website](#)

## **Reform UK**

[Contract with the People of Wales](#)

## **Abolish the Assembly**

[Policy Statement](#)



Political parties in Wales have all made recommendations based upon Covid recovery within their manifestos. We have also been regularly briefing Welsh Government and will be issuing a Covid recovery document that will summarise and highlight key focus areas. This document has been informed by members across the College in Wales.

You can see much of our recent engagement with Welsh Government in our recently issued [2020 Highlights Report](#).

