



Bridgend County Borough Council Interim Strategy for

Adult Community Mental Health Services. September 2023.

Introduction.

In 2012 the Welsh Government launched 'Together for Mental Health. A Strategy for Mental Health in Wales' which was accompanied by a 'Delivery Plan' which was updated in 2019. Both these documents were designed to provide a framework for the development of mental health services in Wales until 2022. The Welsh Government has announced this year that there will be a new mental health strategy for Wales, to replace 'Together for Mental Health', and that further announcements about this will be made later this year. This document provides an interim Bridgend County Borough Council strategy which continues with the themes of 'Together for Mental Health' until the new strategy is announced and implemented.

This strategy gives an overview of mental health services, what drives them, what is delivered in Bridgend and what development plans are there for these services. The strategy applies to adult (over 18) community mental health services in Bridgend for people with a functional, such as depression, rather than organic, such as Dementia, mental health difficulty.

What is mental health and mental ill health?

A simple definition of mental health is mental wellbeing: emotions, thoughts, feelings, our ability to solve problems and overcome difficulties and our social connections; and like physical health and wellbeing it can be affected by illness. A mental illness is an illness which affects the way people think, feel, behave or interact with others. There are different types of mental illness with different symptoms and effects on the way individuals behave. Mental ill health also affects individuals' indifferent degrees of severity and length of time.

Mental ill health affects about 1 in 4 people and some of the common problems are, depression, anxiety, panic attacks, schizophrenia, post-traumatic stress disorder, eating disorders, disruptive behaviour and bipolar disorder.

Experiencing mental ill health can be upsetting, confusing and frightening, particularly at the beginning and some people feel it is a sign of weakness or 'losing my mind', feelings that are often reinforced by other people and wider society.

Primary and secondary community mental health services.

The adult community mental health services in this strategy are delivered at two different levels primary and secondary care.

Primary care services are often the first point of contact people have with health or social care services and includes General Practitioners and other front line health services. It also includes contact points with social care services where people can be provided with information, advice, support and signposting. This also includes health and social care services that provide a supportive or therapeutic service which is usually short term and designed to quickly resolve difficulties individuals are having with their mental health.



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Secondary services are more intensive and long term and include more specialist services such as community mental health teams, psychological services, social work services, crisis services and supported living services. Referral to these services is usually made through a G.P.

Beyond these services are specialist in patient or residential services for people who have been detained under the Mental Health Act.

Partnership working.

One of the most important aspects of adult community mental health services is partnership working. The key partnership in the delivery of services is with health services provided by Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (CTMUHB). This partnership is critical to the successful provision of both primary and secondary services and in Bridgend there is a strong partnership arrangement with good links between managers at all levels. This partnership is responsible for the delivery of a range of services (see below) and coordination of development plans and service developments.

Another key partnership is with groups in the independent and voluntary sector who provide a range of support, advice, information, counselling and therapeutic services. Some of these services have been funded by the council through a small grants scheme that has operated for the last two years.

It is also very important to service development to listen to and include people with a lived experience of mental health services and their carers. The Bridgend Association of Voluntary organisations is in the process of developing an engagement group which will be invaluable in supporting people with a lived experience in Bridgend to make their views known and be involved in service planning and developments. Also, the Welsh Government conducted a national survey in 2022 about engagement and participation and it is anticipated that taking this forward will be a major part of the new strategy for Wales to be announced later this year.

Values and Principles.

The adult community mental health services described in the strategy are delivered according to a set of values and principles some of which underpin all services and others which are specific to services at primary and secondary levels.

The key principles and values which underpin all services are that they will be:

- Focussed on the person who is at the centre of service delivery.
- Support people to recover from mental ill health.
- Be based on a person strength's and led by the outcomes they want.
- That equality and diversity is respected.
- That people are provided with clear information and that their support is coordinated.

For primary services the main principles and values are:



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1. To prevent further deterioration of mental health and wellbeing which impacts on day-to-day functioning.
2. To enable and empower citizens to achieve optimum independence and control of their current circumstances.
3. To improve familial relationships and understanding of mental health and wellbeing.
4. For citizens to develop achievable goals to enrich their life.
5. To promote education and further knowledge of the importance of mental health and wellbeing.
6. To support families and carers
7. To ensure services for young people of transitional age are accessible and provide a seamless journey to adult life with stable mental health and wellbeing.
8. To ensure improved, strong, collaborative, co-ordinated joint-working practices across children's and adult's services and between partner agencies.
9. To ensure that citizens and their families are central to the planning and decision-making process.
10. To improve the choice and control citizens have over their lives as they move through the life course.

For secondary services the main values and principles are:

- a. Services aim to provide high quality, comprehensive, community based Mental Health services, for the adult population of Bridgend County Borough.
- b. The service is Care Coordinator led and underpinned by key mental health legislation the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.
 - **Involvement** - service user and their carers involved in the planning, development and delivery of their care and treatment to the fullest extent possible; in a sensitive way that promotes their confidence and recovery,
 - **Equality, dignity and diversity** - the teams have due regard to a person's need arising from their race, gender, religion, sexuality, age or disability, when delivering services.
 - **Clear communication** - the teams are sensitive to individual's communication and language needs, ensuring their communication avoids jargon; therefore, minimising the risk of inappropriate care and treatment and supporting better outcomes.
 - **Care and treatment planning is proportionate to need and risk**



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- **Care and treatment is integrated and coordinated.**
- c. There is a holistic approach to assessment and care and treatment planning, which is person-centred to embrace the unique strengths, needs and values of service user with lived experience and their carers/supporters.
- d. All care, support, treatment and therapeutic interventions are underpinned by a recovery approach along with being fully committed to maximising well-being for both service user and carers.
- e. The teams work collaboratively with service user carers and its partners (across all sectors) and strive to foster effective working relationships with all based on honesty, transparency, respect, shared responsibility, commitment and active engagement.
- f. Intervention is offered at the earliest opportunity and in the least restrictive way, whilst maintaining the individual's and the public's safety.

Service descriptors.

The council works in close partnership with CTMUHB to provide adult community mental health services at both primary and secondary levels in the county borough.

At the primary level services include:

The Social Care and Recovery Team with is a social care service provides early intervention and prevention services. The service provides short term support to help people overcome mental ill health quickly.

Assisting Recovery in the Community (ARC) is provided jointly by the council and CTMUHB under a legal agreement which provides for joint governance and funding of the service. The service provides a range of daytime opportunities. ARC is a preventative service which provides information advice and support, short term interventions, occupational therapy, activity planning, social support and employment advice and support.

The Local Primary mental health Service is a health service which provides early intervention through the provision of psychological therapies and counselling.

At the secondary level services include:

Two Community Mental Health Teams are multi-disciplinary teams which are jointly provided by the council and CTMUHB.

These teams provided services for people with severe and enduring mental ill health and are made up of social workers, community psychiatric nurses, occupational therapists and psychologists. These



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teams provide long term support and intervention, help people avoid admission to hospital and recover from serious mental ill health.

The Home Treatment Team is jointly provided by the council and CTMUHB. The service is based in the Princess of Wales Hospital and provides an emergency service through a single point of access which will triage people into mental health services who present in a crisis. The team also supports people to remain at home rather than be admitted to hospital.

Other services.

The council also provides two other adult community mental health services. The Approved Mental Health Professional service is provided by specially trained social workers who are approved to coordinate assessments under the mental health Act which can result in people being detained in hospital.

The other service is a supported rehabilitation service which provides temporary accommodation and support to people recovering from mental ill health and on a pathway to more independent living in the community.

Joint Training.

Through a series of workshops, the council is collating information about the training requirements of staff in adult community mental health services and associated independent and third sector groups. A wide range of training needs has been identified and through the process the council will determine the most effective way of delivering the courses, workshops and events required with a strong emphasis on joint training together with partners.

Some examples of the training courses that will be delivered are listed below:

- The causes of mental ill health.
- The impact of social media on mental ill health.
- Impact of legislation and legal updates.
- Mental ill health and associated difficulties as a result of neurodiversity and Autism.
- Joint staff support and development plans.
- Modern slavery and county lines training.
- Suicide awareness.
- Domestic violence awareness.
- Substance misuse and mental ill health.
- Gender identity awareness.
- Responding to trauma and adverse childhood experience.

Joint working priorities.

Working in partnership with CTMUHB the council is involved in a number of joint working projects which are coordinated through a joint operational group. The current joint working priorities are:



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- Further developing patient pathways and team operational policies.
- Supporting people in crisis through the development of a wellbeing retreat coproduced with the independent sector.
- Consolidating eating disorder services in partnership with the third sector.
- Further development of the multidisciplinary team structure of perinatal services.
- Work to align adult community mental health services with the community clusters.
- Development and implementation of the substance misuse homelessness service.
- The coordination and planning for people in need of accommodation, including improving rehabilitation accommodation support pathways.
- Development of improved commissioning of specialist mental health residential and supported living accommodation.

Bridgend Commissioning plan.

Local operational service development will also be guided by the recently established 'Planning Group for Adults with Lifelong Conditions or Complex Care Needs'. This group aims to develop the service requirements and business cases for future investment and commissioning of adult community mental health services. This will include work towards better local accommodation provision for those that need it, as well as supporting the work of the joint operational group to progress other service capacity initiatives such as improving links the Community Clusters for more accessible mental health services.

Adult Community Mental Health Services and Substance Misuse services.

There is often a relationship between some individuals mental ill health and their inappropriate use of substances usually drugs and alcohol. In these circumstances it is critical that mental health and substance misuse services work together to provide appropriate coordinated support. In the county borough there are substance misuse services at both primary and secondary levels. An independent sector group called Barod provide services in primary care which include information advice and support, early intervention and preventative services. Barod have a close and effective working relationship with adult community mental health services with clear referral and joint working pathways. The Community Drug and Alcohol team which is a multi-disciplinary team provided by the council and CTMUHB provides secondary care services and effective working relationships are established with all areas of mental health services. The council is planning to further develop and strengthen these links by appointing a specialist social worker to work across the two service areas.

Mental Health and Autism.

Autistic adults are at significantly higher risk, than the rest of the adult population, of experiencing mental ill health. The most commonly reported conditions are depression and anxiety.

Despite this it is difficult to determine the true rates of depression and anxiety in autistic people and many features of autism can be considered as symptoms of depression and anxiety. Furthermore,



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some of the characteristics of autism may affect the way mental health problems present. For example, anxiety is not a core feature of autism, however, 40-50% of autistic adults have significant levels of anxiety and can be described as having an anxiety disorder. This is particularly concerning because of the detrimental impact it has on an individual's wellbeing and quality of life.

Autistic adults who are experiencing episodes of depression, report high rates of suicidal thoughts, and suicide plans or attempts. This means that autistic people are at a higher risk of suicide than the general population.

Because of this it is essential that staff in all mental health services receive appropriate training in understanding the links between mental ill health and autism and how to respond appropriately. A council training plan to reflect this is being implemented and this training will also be a major feature of the joint training plan mentioned above.

Regional working.

AS part of the regional working arrangements the Joint Partnership Board has established an adult mental health workstream called 'Better Together for mental health'. The council has representation on this group which has a wide-ranging agenda linked to the current Welsh Government policy 'Together for Mental Health' and is involved in the preparatory work for the new Welsh Government strategy and associated workforce plan. The councils' representatives also make an important contribution to the groups work plan including workstreams related to Suicide and self-harm prevention, cooccurring mental health and substance misuse and care and treatment planning. The group is also working to increase and promote the involvement of third and independent sector organisations and people with lived experience in service developments.

This strategy is subject to review and updating in line with announcement from the Welsh Government about a new mental health strategy for Wales.