



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



# National Mental Health Research Strategy

## Summary



**Sharing the Vision**  
A Mental Health  
Policy for Everyone

### Note on full strategy and page numbers

The page numbers we mention in this summary refer to the full strategy where you can find more details. The full strategy is available at [www.gov.ie/health](http://www.gov.ie/health)



### Plain English Summary

This document is a summary of the full strategy. This summary was developed with support from the [National Adult Literacy Agency](#).

Published by the Health Research Board for the Government of Ireland

© Health Research Board 2024

# Background

Mental health touches every life. It enables individuals, communities and society to thrive. There is a growing awareness of its importance, and research on mental health will play a central role in improving wellbeing and quality of life.

This research strategy follows on from:

- [Sharing the Vision – A Mental Health Policy for Everyone](#), Ireland’s national mental health policy for 2020–2030; and
- The [Sharing the Vision Implementation Plan 2022–2024](#).

Sharing the Vision – A Mental Health Policy for Everyone aims to shift our mental health services towards more community-based, recovery-oriented support for the whole population. Mental health research is crucial to put this national policy in place and to evaluate its impact.

Research aims to deepen our understanding of mental health. It uncovers the many factors that affect it. Research discovers:

- what services and supports work;
- for whom;
- under what circumstances; and
- at what cost.

This knowledge enables us to:

- promote mental health;
- prevent mental health difficulties;
- address the social determinants of mental health; and
- provide accessible, acceptable, and effective mental health support at all ages and stages of life.

Improving mental health is complex. Research provides the evidence we need to tackle this challenge together.

In the Sharing the Vision Implementation Plan 2022–2024, the Health Research Board was tasked with developing a national mental health research strategy. This strategy was to be aligned to the goals in Sharing the Vision – A Mental Health Policy for Everyone.

The National Mental Health Research Strategy Expert Group led this research strategy. It was also informed by a public consultation. This expert group put together this document, the National Mental Health Research Strategy.

This strategy aims to ensure that research has a real impact and improves the lives and wellbeing of people across Ireland.

## About this strategy for mental health research

This first National Mental Health Research Strategy for Ireland is a unique opportunity to create a robust mental health research system.

The strategy seeks to transform how mental health research is conducted. We want to get people meaningfully involved throughout the research process. This includes:

- people with lived experience
- families
- supporters
- communities
- researchers from many different fields; and
- knowledge users such as policymakers and decision makers in health and social care.

The aim of this strategy is to develop an integrated mental health research system. This system will build on progress to date.

This strategy has an ambitious vision and mission supported by core values (see page 6 of the full strategy).

The framework for this strategy looks like this:

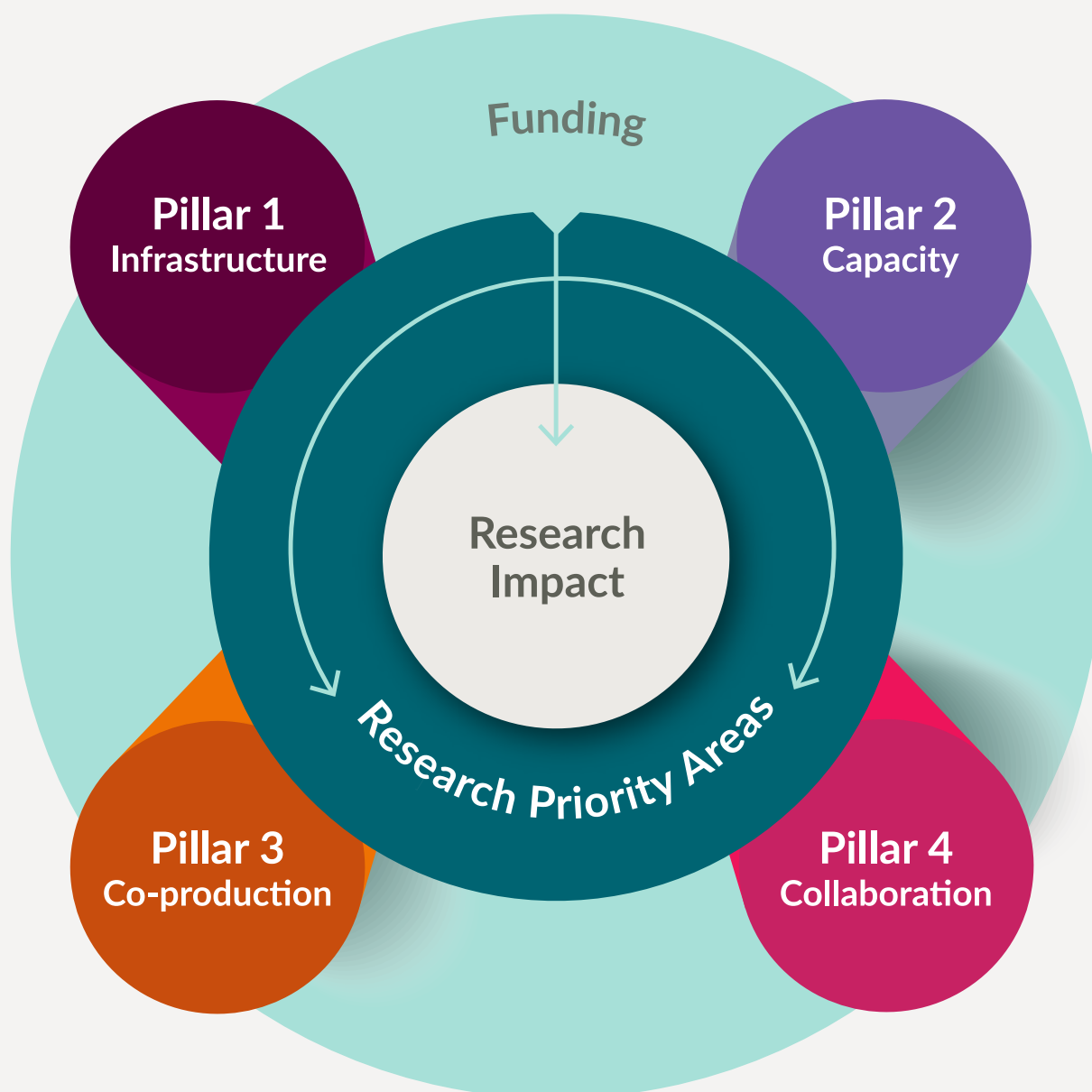


Figure 1: Mental health research strategy framework for Ireland.

Let's look briefly at each part of this framework.

## Funding

Additional increased and sustained funding is needed for this strategy to work and have the desired impact. This includes funding for all parts of the strategic framework, including its research priority areas. The actions for funding are on pages 28-29 of the full strategy. Financing plans for increased funding will be developed in the implementation plan for the strategy.

## Research Priority Areas

Under this strategic framework the focus is on achieving impact in research priority areas.

These research priority areas sit under four themes:

- promotion, prevention, and early intervention;
- service access, coordination, and continuity of care;
- social inclusion; and
- accountability and continuous improvement.

These themes came from Sharing the Vision – A Mental Health Policy for Everyone.

There are 15 research priority areas across the themes. The research priority areas will be the focus for mental health research and evaluation in Ireland from now until 2030, when the strategy will be reviewed. Organisations and agencies can determine their own mental health research objectives, research questions, and projects in line with these priorities. See pages 30-33 of the full strategy for the research priority areas.



## The four key pillars of research

To make sure that the mental health research system is robust, we have developed four key pillars of research. These pillars and their actions will enable research to be carried out in the priority areas. They will also strengthen our mental health research system overall.





## Pillar 1 Infrastructure

### **Pillar 1: Infrastructure of the mental health research system**

This refers to processes, systems, and structures needed for high-quality research. The specific actions to improve research infrastructure are on page 35 of the full strategy.



## Pillar 2 Capacity

### Pillar 2: Capacity of mental health research workforce

This refers to the people who are at the centre of the mental health research system. This includes people from:

- research institutions;
- health and social care settings in the public and private sectors;
- the voluntary and community sector; and
- many other settings that contribute to mental health research.

All of these people need training and support so they can conduct high quality mental health research. In all of these settings, peer researchers with lived experience of mental health difficulties are needed.

The specific actions to improve capacity are on page 37 of the full strategy.

## Pillar 3 Co-production

### Pillar 3: Co-production in research

This refers to working closely with people with lived experience as well as their families, supporters, and communities. Co-production is needed to identify and address research problems or challenges that affect them. It involves:

- meaningful participation in research;
- shared decision-making; and
- contribution throughout the research process, from beginning to end.

The specific actions to improve co-production in research are on page 39 of the full strategy.



## Pillar 4 Collaboration

### **Pillar 4: Collaboration on research across all disciplines and sectors**

This refers to work to develop a broad integrated mental health research system. This will include a network that will work across all disciplines, institutions, and sectors and will include researchers, practitioners, and policymakers.

The actions to improve collaboration and to create an engaged mental health research community are on page 41 of the full strategy.





## Research impact

We need to make sure that mental health research makes a real difference to the lives and wellbeing of people across Ireland. We also need a more systematic approach to recording the impact of mental health research. This needs to start with improving structures to help us reliably identify and measure impacts. The specific actions needed to maximise the impact of research on mental health services and improve the lives and wellbeing of people across Ireland are on page 43 of the full strategy.



## Implementing this research strategy

Implementation plans will be developed for this strategy. Each implementation plan will be for a three year period. The first implementation plan will be for 2025-2027. The implementation plans will make sure that progress is made on the actions in this strategy.

An implementation and oversight group will monitor how well this strategy is working. It will be chaired by the Department of Health.

The whole strategy will be reviewed and updated in 2030.

This mental health research strategy has the potential to make a real difference to all our lives. Let's work together to make this happen.







**For more information contact:**

Department of Health,  
Block 1, Miesian Plaza,  
50 – 58 Lower Baggot Street,  
D02 XW14

Website: [www.gov.ie/health](http://www.gov.ie/health)

Email: [info@health.gov.ie](mailto:info@health.gov.ie)

Phone: (01) 6354000



**Rialtas na hÉireann**  
Government of Ireland

