



An Roinn Sláinte
Department of Health



Pathways to Wellbeing

National Mental Health
Promotion Plan 2024–2030



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Foreword

I am very pleased to present *Pathways to Wellbeing* the National Mental Health Promotion Plan which is one of the priorities in both the Healthy Ireland Strategic Action Plan and *Sharing the Vision: A Mental Health Policy for Everyone 2020–2030*.

The vision for Healthy Ireland is to create a society where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential, and where health is valued and supported at every level in society.

Mental health is an integral part of health and wellbeing and promoting good mental health is essential to improve overall population health. There is compelling international evidence that interventions promoting positive mental health can result in impressive long-lasting positive effects on multiple areas of functioning and have the dual effect of reducing risk for mental health difficulties.

The development of this Plan marks an important milestone in the mental health policy journey that the Department of Health has embarked upon. The aim of *Pathways to Wellbeing* is to promote positive mental health for everyone, and to deliver actions across government which improve people's mental health and wellbeing through universal supports for all, and targeted supports addressing the needs of those most at risk of experiencing mental health difficulties.

The Plan is underpinned by a whole of Government approach which is essential to address the broader determinants of health and health inequalities. There are also many other organisations and groups whose initiatives and programmes are highlighted and are essential in achieving a whole population-based approach to positive mental health.

I would sincerely like to thank everyone who was involved in the development of this Plan, in particular the Oversight Group, University of Galway, and my colleagues in the Mental Health Unit of the Department of Health who partnered with Healthy Ireland to oversee this work. I look forward to progressing this agenda to ensure that positive mental health and wellbeing is actively promoted, supported and valued across society.

Professor Mary Horgan
Interim Chief Medical Officer
Department of Health



Executive Summary

Pathways to Wellbeing – National Mental Health Promotion Plan is a cross-government plan which aims to improve people’s mental health and wellbeing at population level. The plan is Ireland’s first cross-government mental health promotion plan and is a culmination of both policy commitments made by Government and recommendations from international partners. By creating this plan, the Government of Ireland is signalling a commitment to improving the mental health and wellbeing of every person and reducing the risk of mental health difficulties across the life course.

What is Mental Health Promotion?

Mental health promotion is concerned with strengthening protective factors for good mental health, enhancing supportive environments and enabling access to skills, resources and life opportunities that promote the mental health and wellbeing of individuals and populations.

The Vision of Pathways to Wellbeing

“A healthy Ireland where positive mental health and wellbeing is actively promoted, supported, and valued across society and whole of Government.”

The aim of Pathways to Wellbeing


To promote positive mental health for everyone and to deliver actions across government which improve people’s mental health and wellbeing through both universal supports for all, and targeted supports addressing the needs of those most at risk of experiencing mental health difficulties.

The principles that will guide Pathways to Wellbeing


- > A whole-system approach
- > Partnership and intersectoral action
- > A population-based, life-course approach
- > Universal as well as targeted supports
- > A determinants of mental health approach
- > Evidence-based and evidence-informed actions

The high-level goals for Pathways to Wellbeing


Good mental health is a key component of overall health and wellbeing. The high-level goals in this plan are underpinned by evidence and focus on the key areas which can have a significant impact on promoting mental health and wellbeing at a population level. They include the need to:




Strengthen the foundations for positive mental health in the early years




Enhance children and young people’s social and emotional development




Strengthen community belonging and connectedness



Ensure mental health promotion is integrated in the workplace



Address the social and structural determinants of mental health and reduce mental health inequalities especially for disadvantaged, marginalised and vulnerable groups



Mainstream mental health promotion across government policies and programmes

Implementation of Pathways to Wellbeing

The implementation of *Pathways to Wellbeing* will be driven by Healthy Ireland in the Department of Health, which will oversee the cross-sectoral engagement and delivery of agreed objectives and actions set out in the Plan.


This will require the establishment of appropriate governance and implementation structures and will be underpinned by four key pillars:

- > Strategic Leadership
- > Cross-government Engagement
- > Partnership Working
- > Research and Evidence

What Pathways to Wellbeing will achieve


It is envisaged that the full implementation of *Pathways to Wellbeing* will increase awareness and understanding of positive mental health among policymakers and the general public.

The promotion of positive mental health and wellbeing will have a significant impact across several levels:




Individual level

Individuals will have improved knowledge, skills and opportunities to protect and promote their mental health and wellbeing, enabling an improved sense of control over their lives.



Community level

Increased sense of belonging, social inclusion and connectedness at community level with improved access to supportive physical, cultural and social living environments.



Structural level

Improved cross-sectoral policies and actions that remove structural barriers to good mental health at a societal level, including reducing poverty, homelessness, social inequalities, discrimination, racism, and improving access to essential services such as childcare, education, employment, good living conditions and healthcare.

Section 1

Introduction

Pathways to Wellbeing – National Mental Health Promotion Plan is a cross-government plan and national approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all. This is Ireland’s first national mental health promotion plan, and it sets out the key objectives and actions to be achieved over the next five years. By creating this plan, the Government of Ireland is signalling a commitment to improving the mental health and wellbeing of every person and reducing the risk of mental health difficulties across the life course.

Good mental health is a key component of healthy lives and wellbeing for all. There is, therefore, a need to approach the promotion of positive mental health at a population and community level through a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. This plan marks a significant milestone in the mental health policy journey upon which the Government has embarked.

Addressing the key areas of mental health promotion calls for a whole-of-government approach to ensure that the environment and conditions which create good mental health and reduce inequalities are accessible to all.

One of the essential aspects of this plan is to build on the work already undertaken by other government departments (Appendix 1) and working together to ensure that mental health and wellbeing needs are considered in future policy priorities. In addition, it is important to recognise the work of other statutory agencies, NGOs and community groups whose programmes align with the overall mental health promotion agenda.

What is mental health promotion?




Mental health promotion is concerned with strengthening protective factors for good mental health, enhancing supportive environments and enabling access to skills, resources and life opportunities that promote the mental health and wellbeing of individuals and populations.¹ It is an area of work that is informed by actions, policies, and research requiring a broad perspective on mental health promotion across the whole population, and not just focussing on those with mental health difficulties.

Mental health promotion works at three levels:

- > **Strengthening individuals**
Supporting people with the knowledge, skills and opportunities to protect and improve their mental health and wellbeing
- > **Strengthening communities where people live, learn, work and play**
Increasing a sense of belonging, social inclusion and participation in communities, delivering supports that enhance mental health in key settings such as schools, workplaces and local communities
- > **Addressing structural barriers to good mental health at a societal level**
Through initiatives to reduce poverty, discrimination, social inequalities and stigma; promoting access to education, housing, meaningful employment, supportive social and cultural structures.

¹ Barry MM, Clarke A, Petersen I & Jenkins E (2019). *Implementing Mental Health Promotion*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer

Figure 1: Examples of factors determining mental health²

 Individual	 Family and Community	 Structural
<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Genetic factors> Social and emotional skills> Sense of self-worth and mastery> Good physical health> Physical activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Good perinatal nutrition> Good parenting> Physical security and safety> Positive social networks, social capital and social supports> Green spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Economic security> Good quality infrastructure> Equal access to services> Quality natural environment> Social justice and integration> Income and social protection> Social and gender equality

² World Health Organisation, (2022). *World Mental Health Report: Transforming mental health for all*, (p21). World Health Organisation

Section 2

Rationale for *Pathways to Wellbeing*

Mental health promotion is an essential activity for improving health and wellbeing, preventing poor mental health and achieving a wide range of positive health, social, and economic outcomes.^{3,4} With the growing burden of mental health difficulties globally, it is increasingly recognised that treatment approaches alone are not sufficient, and that mental health promotion and prevention strategies are needed to improve population mental health and ensure healthy lives.⁵

It is essential that at a societal level every effort is made to prevent people from developing mental health difficulties. This can be done by promoting positive mental health in homes, schools and colleges, clubs, workplaces and communities. It requires working together at the level of national Government, local authorities, and across community and voluntary organisations to deliver both universal solutions that protect everyone, and targeted solutions supporting those most at risk of experiencing mental health difficulties.

There is a strong social, scientific and economic case for investing in mental health promotion. International evidence shows that mental health promotion works, leading to improved mental health and broader health and social wellbeing outcomes for individuals and population groups across the life course.^{6,7,8} Not investing in mental health promotion means the economic cost of mental ill-health negatively impacts various sectors, such as health care costs, social welfare supports, and labour market participation. While not all the costs associated with mental health difficulties are avoidable, actions to prevent even a small fraction of these costs have been shown to be highly cost effective. These actions include universal and

targeted parenting supports, social and emotional supports delivered in schools, workplace mental health promotion interventions and suicide prevention strategies.⁹ This economic case strengthens the argument for adopting a cross-sectoral and whole-of-government approach to mental health promotion.

International Policy Context

Mental health promotion has been advocated for at international level. The World Health Organisation’s (WHO) *Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013–2030* highlights the importance of mental health promotion and calls on national partners to strengthen the implementation of mental health promotion and prevention strategies at a population level. The WHO plan highlights that these strategies must respect and encompass human rights, particularly the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and be based on sound, scientific evidence. In addition, one of the key targets of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals aims to reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment, and the promotion of mental health and wellbeing.¹⁰

National Policy Context

The importance of mental health promotion is recognised by our national health and mental health policies. Ireland’s national mental health policy *Sharing the Vision: A Mental Health Policy for Everyone 2020–2030*,¹¹ recognises the importance of mental health promotion and prevention working alongside treatment and recovery. The *Healthy Ireland Strategic Action Plan 2021–2025*¹² sets out the roadmap for improving and supporting the health and wellbeing of the people of Ireland and aims to bring a concerted focus on life-long wellbeing. The *Sláintecare Strategy and Action Plan 2021–2023*¹³ provides a focus on promoting health through the healthy living workstream which includes mental health and wellbeing. All the above recommend the development of a National Mental Health Promotion Plan.

The Wellbeing Framework for Ireland provides¹⁴ an important frame of reference for integrating cross-government action on promoting equitable mental health and wellbeing outcomes at a population level. This Framework is being used across Government as a measure of social progress, taking account of population well-being alongside social and economic progress. It also provides both the impetus and broader policy context for *Pathways to Wellbeing* and shows that promoting good mental health is not only important from a health perspective but also contributes to improved social and economic wellbeing.

In addition, *Connecting for Life, 2015–2024*,¹⁵ Ireland’s national strategy to reduce suicide and self-harm identifies the value of mental health promotion as part of a holistic approach to suicide prevention and recommends the development of a national mental health promotion plan.

In 2022 the HSE developed and launched *Stronger Together: The HSE’s Mental Health Promotion Plan (2022–2027)*.¹⁶ This plan is focused on mental health promotion across the health service. *Pathways to Wellbeing* will complement and strengthen the implementation of *Stronger Together* by enabling the delivery of cross-government actions that address the broader social and structural determinants of mental health.

Over the past few decades, good progress has been made through *Healthy Ireland* and other policy initiatives in improving population health and addressing some of the key social determinants of health. A key challenge now is to focus on improving and promoting mental health and wellbeing at a whole-of-society level.

Mental Health Status in Ireland

The 2021 *Healthy Ireland Survey* reported declining levels of good mental health in the population aged 15 years and over since the last survey in 2016.¹⁷ Whilst the 2023 *Healthy Ireland Survey*¹⁸ reported an improvement in population mental health since the pandemic years, levels have not yet recovered to those prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. Since the pandemic, we have witnessed a heightened need to reconnect with others and with the physical and natural environments. This has highlighted the need to prioritise the promotion of positive mental health and wellbeing at a population level, especially for disadvantaged and marginalised population groups.

³ World Health Organisation (WHO) (2001). *Comprehensive mental health action plan 2013–2030*. World Health Organisation

⁴ United Nations. (2015). *UN Sustainable Development Goals*. New York: United Nations

⁵ World Health Organisation (WHO) (2001). *The World Health Report 2001. Mental Health: New Understanding, New Hope*. Geneva: World Health Organisation

⁶ McDaid, D. & Park, A. (2022). *The Economic Case for Investing in the Prevention of Mental Health Conditions in the UK*. Mental Health Foundation.

⁷ World Health Organisation, (2022). *World Mental Health Report: Transforming mental health for all*. World Health Organisation

⁸ Kuosmanen, T., Keppler, T., Dowling, K., Barry, M. M. (2022). *Evidence Synthesis of Impact of Mental Health Promotion: A systematic rapid evidence assessment of the effectiveness of mental health promotion interventions across the lifecourse*. Health Promotion Research Centre, National University of Ireland Galway

⁹ McDaid, D. & Park, A. (2022). *The Economic Case for Investing in the Prevention of Mental Health Conditions in the UK*. Mental Health Foundation

¹⁰ United Nations (2015). *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Sustainable Development knowledge platform. New York: United Nations

¹¹ Department of Health (2020). *Sharing the Vision: A Mental Health Policy for Everyone*. Dublin: Government of Ireland

¹² Department of Health (2021). *Healthy Ireland Strategic Action Plan 2021–2025*. Dublin: Government of Ireland

¹³ Department of Health (2021). *Sláintecare Strategy and Action Plan 2021–2023*. Dublin: Government of Ireland

¹⁴ Government of Ireland (2022). *Understanding Life in Ireland: A Well-being Framework*. Dublin: Department of the Taoiseach


¹⁵ Department of Health (2015). *Connecting for Life: Ireland’s Strategy to Reduce Suicide 2015–2025*. Department of Health. Dublin: Government of Ireland

¹⁶ Health Services Executive (2022). *Stronger Together – HSE Mental Health Promotion Plan (2022–2027)*. Dublin: HSE

¹⁷ Department of Health. (2021). *Healthy Ireland Survey Report*. Dublin: Government Publications


¹⁸ Department of Health. (2023). *Healthy Ireland Survey Report*. Dublin: Government Publications

Section 2: Rationale for Pathways to Wellbeing continued



Loneliness

Loneliness is recognised as a significant health and social issue.¹⁹ There is increasing evidence that loneliness is associated with various adverse physical and mental health outcomes. Recent data examining young people’s mental health revealed that one third of 13-year-old girls in Ireland report feeling lonely *most of the time* or *all of the time*.²⁰ Similar figures have been reported among older adults aged 50+.²¹



Children and young people

Childhood and adolescence are critical periods for the development of social and emotional competencies and skills which are important for good mental health and wellbeing throughout life. Mental health difficulties are the leading cause of disability in adolescents aged 15–19 years. As well as having a negative impact during this key period of development, international research provides consistent evidence that mental health difficulties during adolescence are associated with an increased risk of adverse adult outcomes across mental health, education and employment.²² Recent data from the HBSC survey in Ireland indicates that 26% of adolescent boys and 46% of adolescent girls were identified as having low mood or at risk of depression.²³ These indicators of poorer mental health appear to be particularly pronounced among older girls aged 15–17 years.

Mental Health Inequalities

Our mental health is shaped by the social, economic and physical environments in which we live. Inequalities in mental health arise because of inequalities in society – in the

conditions in which people are born, grow, learn, live, work and age. People with low incomes have higher rates of mental health difficulties, including severe and enduring problems, compared to high income groups.^{24,25} As a result of the recent cost-of-living crisis, increasing levels of poverty and financial difficulties have been shown to have a significant impact on psychological stress, anxiety and depression. Taking action to reduce inequalities is fundamental to improving the mental health of the whole population and ensuring a fairer distribution of good mental health.

Priority Groups

The idea of wellbeing and the basis of promoting positive mental health is universal and shared; everyone should aspire to and be supported in pursuing positive mental health for wellbeing. However, this plan recognises that certain members of our society are at higher risk of experiencing mental ill-health due to their specific circumstances. Some people within these groups may require more tailored supports and interventions to enable them to improve their mental health. ‘Priority groups’ refers to individuals or groups who may have a higher risk of experiencing mental health difficulties due to their situational, cultural, environmental or familial experiences (as opposed to any inherent weakness). This is an umbrella term, under which different groups of people may be included as new priority groups emerge.

Such groups may (but do not necessarily) include people living in poverty, people with chronic health conditions, children exposed to abuse and neglect, people with addiction issues, people experiencing homelessness, ethnic groups, Irish Travellers and Roma, older people, people experiencing discrimination and human rights violations, LGBTIQ+ people, prisoners, refugees and migrants, and people exposed to conflict, natural disasters or other humanitarian emergencies.

¹⁹ Office of the Surgeon General (2023). Our epidemic of loneliness and isolation: The US Surgeon General’s Advisory on the healing effects of social connection and community

²⁰ Gavin, A., Költő, A., Lunney, L., Maloney, R., Walker, L., Gabhainn, S., & Kelly, C. (2024). The Irish Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) Study 2022. Health Promotion Research Centre, University of Galway

²¹ Ward, M., O’Mahoney, P., & Kenny, R.A. (2021). Altered lives in a time of crisis: the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the lives of older adults in Ireland. Dublin: The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA), 10, 2021-01

²² Clarke, A.M. & Lovewell, K. (2021). Adolescent mental health evidence brief 2: The relationship between emotional and behavioural problems in adolescence and adult outcomes. Early Intervention Foundation

²³ Gavin, A., Költő, A., Lunney, L., Maloney, R., Walker, L., Gabhainn, S., & Kelly, C. (2024). The Irish Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) Study 2022. Health Promotion Research Centre, University of Galway

²⁴ Marmot, M., Allen, J., Goldblatt, P., Boyce, T., McNeish, D., Grady, M., & Geddes, I. (2010). Fair society, healthy lives: Strategic review of health inequalities in England post 2010. Department of Health, England

²⁵ Ridley, M., Rao, G., Schilbach, F., & Patel, V. (2020). Poverty, depression, and anxiety: Causal evidence and mechanisms. Science, 370(6522).

Section 3
Development of Pathways to Wellbeing

Consultation with key stakeholders

To inform development of the plan, a consultation with key stakeholders was carried out to identify priority areas for mental health promotion at a national level. This involved engagement with government departments, agencies, and stakeholders from the community and voluntary sector who were broadly involved in mental health promotion. The report was published in January 2022.²⁶

Evidence Synthesis

The Department of Health commissioned an evidence synthesis on the impact of mental health promotion interventions across the life course and in key settings. This review focused on mental health promotion and found robust evidence concerning the positive impact of mental health promotion actions across the life course. The findings show that well-designed mental health promotion interventions, implemented in diverse health, education, employment, community and digital settings, have a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing and lead to a range of positive health and social outcomes.²⁷

Both universal and targeted interventions were identified, that have been shown to enhance good mental health, reduce the risk of mental health difficulties, and advance population health and wellbeing.

Establishment of Oversight Group

The development of this plan has been informed by previous policies and has been guided by the National Mental Health Promotion Plan Oversight Group established in 2022. Supported by the Department of Health, this was a cross-departmental and organisational group that was pivotal in guiding the development of this plan and ensuring support for it. The Oversight Group included members from government departments and agencies, advocacy groups, service providers, and mental health professionals (Appendix 2).

Review of Mental Health Promotion Policy Approaches

Following the establishment of the Oversight Group and building on the earlier work completed to provide information on the international evidence, a desktop review was undertaken to provide insights in relation to international experience in developing and implementing mental health promotion policy at a country level.²⁸ This review focused on selected countries, with similar populations to Ireland, in an effort to understand how mental health promotion policy was approached in those countries, what the priority areas were and how it was implemented. The common themes that emerged included the incorporation of a whole-of-population approach concentrating on the social and structural determinants of mental health, the importance of reducing inequalities, creating supportive social and physical environments, early intervention, inclusivity, and the importance of ensuring effective coordination and collaborative working between government and those working at community level.

²⁶ Stakeholder Consultation to inform the development of the National Mental Health Promotion Plan (2022). Available at <https://assets.gov.ie/245532/34fb0d51-bfa8-4ab0-8efe-85904b5fab2b.pdf>

²⁷ Kuosmanen, T., Keppler, T., Dowling, K., Barry, M. M. (2022). Evidence Synthesis of Impact of Mental Health Promotion: A systematic rapid evidence assessment of the effectiveness of mental health promotion interventions across the life course. Health Promotion Research Centre, National University of Ireland Galway

²⁸ Barry, M.M., Keppler, T., Sheridan, A. (2023). Development of the National Mental Health Promotion Plan: Report prepared for the Department of Health, Ireland. Health Promotion Research Centre, University of Galway

Section 3: Development of Pathways to Wellbeing continued

Consultation with International Stakeholders

A series of roundtable discussions were also held with international experts, all of whom were involved in the development and/or implementation of mental health policies in their own countries. The OECD Centre on Well-Being, Inclusion, Sustainability and Equal Opportunity (WISE) centre was also consulted in relation to their work on applying a wellbeing framework to population mental health policy. Key themes arising from these discussions included:

Table 2: Summary of Key Themes that Emerged from the Roundtable Discussions (adapted)²⁹

Policy Development	Policy Implementation	Other implementation mechanisms
Enablers getting buy-in across Government Departments	Coordinating mechanisms to ensure delivery of cross-sectoral actions	Monitoring and evaluation
<div><div>> Cross-sectoral engagement</div><div>> High-level mandate</div><div>> Dedicated staff resource</div><div>> Common framework and language</div><div>> Building on existing priorities and processes</div><div>> Making the business case</div><div>> Public participation</div></div>	<div><div>> High-level political will and commitment</div><div>> Legislation, long term policy and vision</div><div>> Independent oversight</div><div>> Dedicated coordination role or core team with dedicated leads</div><div>> Dedicated funding</div><div>> Capacity development and upskilling the workforce</div><div>> Cross-government accountability mechanisms</div></div>	<div><div>> Establish a national data set</div><div>> Connect with broader data sets</div><div>> Mental health literacy</div><div>> Dedicated mental health promotion research</div></div>

Based on the evidence and development process, the vision, aim and goals of the plan were identified in consultation with the Oversight Group.

²⁹ Barry, M.M., Keppler, T., Sheridan, A. (2023). Development of the National Mental Health Promotion Plan: Executive Summary Report prepared for the Department of Health, Ireland. Health Promotion Research Centre, University of Galway

Section 4
Pathways to Wellbeing: The National Mental Health Promotion Plan

The Vision of Pathways to Wellbeing

“A healthy Ireland where positive mental health and wellbeing is actively promoted, supported, and valued across society and whole of Government.”

The Aim of Pathways to Wellbeing

To promote positive mental health for everyone and to deliver actions across government which improve people’s mental health and wellbeing through both universal supports for all, and targeted supports addressing the needs of those most at risk of experiencing mental health difficulties.

The Principles that will guide Pathways to Wellbeing

- > A whole-system approach whereby all sectors, not solely the health sector, play their part in protecting and promoting population mental health and wellbeing
- > Partnership and intersectoral action across settings and sectors
- > A population-based, life-course approach
- > Universal as well as targeted interventions and supports delivered in everyday settings in an empowering and participatory manner
- > A holistic approach that addresses the social, physical, economic and environmental determinants of mental health, wellbeing and equity
- > Evidence-based and evidence-informed actions

The High-level Goals for Pathways to Wellbeing

- The high-level goals are:
- > Strengthen foundations for positive mental health in the early years
 - > Enhance children and young people’s social and emotional development
 - > Strengthen community belonging and connectedness
 - > Ensure mental health promotion is integrated in the workplace
 - > Address the social and structural determinants of mental health and reduce mental health inequities, especially for disadvantaged, marginalised and vulnerable groups
 - > Mainstream mental health promotion across government policies and programmes

A series of bi-lateral engagements with key government departments were conducted throughout 2023 to agree the objectives and actions required to drive implementation of the Plan. The agreed actions (Appendix 3) will provide the foundation for the implementation strategy, which will require further engagement with other government departments and key stakeholders to prioritise actions and agree timelines and reporting mechanisms.

Impact of Pathways to Wellbeing

It is envisaged that the full implementation of Pathways to Wellbeing will increase awareness and understanding of positive mental health among policymakers and the general public.

The promotion of positive mental health and wellbeing will have a while having a significant impact across several levels:



Individual

Individuals will have improved knowledge, skills and opportunities to protect and promote their mental health and wellbeing enabling an improved sense of control over their lives.



Community

Increased sense of belonging, social inclusion and connectedness at community level with improved access to supportive physical, cultural and social living environments.



Structural

Improved cross-sectoral policies and actions that remove structural barriers to good mental health at a societal level, including reducing poverty, homelessness, social inequalities, discrimination, racism, and improving access to essential services such as childcare, education, employment, good living conditions and healthcare.

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Section 5

Pathways to Wellbeing: High-level Goals and Objectives

The high-level goals and objectives in this Plan align with international mental health promotion priorities and provide a clear roadmap for promoting positive mental health and wellbeing in Ireland over the next five years. They are underpinned by evidence and focus on the key areas which can have a significant impact on promoting mental health and wellbeing at a population level.

High-level Goals



1. Strengthen foundations for positive mental health in early years

This goal focuses on the early years of life, between the ages of 0 and 3. The early years are a particularly important period in human development as this period lays the foundation for cognitive, behavioural, social, emotional, physical and intellectual development throughout the lifecycle. Positive experiences and supportive environments in early childhood can have a significant effect on children's mental health and wellbeing. The objectives within this goal aim to enhance infants' and young children's mental health and wellbeing through the provision of supports at the individual, family and community level including parents, family members, early childhood care and education settings, health and social care providers.

- Objective 1:** Increase access to antenatal and postnatal supports that improve maternal and infant mental wellbeing.
- Objective 2:** Identify the enablers and supports that improve infant social and emotional development in the early years in policy, and practice.
- Objective 3:** Work to mainstream a positive mental health focus into parenting supports.



2. Enhance children's and young people's social and emotional development

This goal builds on the solid foundation established through the early years and focuses on children's and young people's social and emotional development, and on learning and education throughout the life course. A significant body of evidence indicates that enhancing social and emotional skills during this period is a key determinant of children's and young people's mental health and wellbeing. Promoting children and young people's social and emotional wellbeing supports them in achieving positive outcomes in school, work and life more generally. Education settings play a vital role in the development of these core skills through the provision of curriculum teaching and learning as well as a safe, supportive environment with social networks and positive adult role models.

The objectives within this goal focus on enhancing children's and young people's social and emotional development through the provision of universal and targeted interventions, professional development opportunities for education professionals, and access to lifelong learning opportunities across the life course.

- Objective 1:** Equip professionals working in early learning and care, primary, post-primary, third level education and voluntary youth and community services to better support the social and emotional development of children and young people through professional development learning opportunities.
- Objective 2:** Improve opportunities for the social and emotional development of children and young people through the delivery of statutory and non-statutory universal programmes and supports.
- Objective 3:** Provide targeted social, emotional, and behaviour support to ensure that the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people most at risk of developing mental health difficulties are addressed.
- Objective 4:** Promote the benefits of lifelong learning opportunities that support mental health and wellbeing across the life course.



3. Strengthen community belonging and connectedness

This goal recognises that communities comprise a broad range of organisations, groups and services that can offer opportunities to enhance mental health and wellbeing by strengthening connection and social ties. The mental health benefits of connecting with people and nature, and engagement in activities such as arts and creativity, sports, culture, and volunteering, have been recognised for both the general population and for priority groups. Community-based supports such as social prescribing are an effective means of engaging people in non-clinical activities and services in their local community, which can address the determinants of mental health such as loneliness, stress and lack of social support. The objectives within this goal focus on strengthening community belonging and engagement while addressing the availability of supports and resources.

- Objective 1:** Promote positive mental health and wellbeing across the life course through community engagement and empowerment programmes, especially for vulnerable groups.
- Objective 2:** Extend the reach of social prescribing for marginalised and vulnerable groups in the community as a vehicle for improving mental health.
- Objective 3:** Work in partnership with key community stakeholders to implement a range of social networking, social capital, and other supports that promote mental health and wellbeing through cross-community engagement.
- Objective 4:** Develop and implement digital supports for promoting mental health across the life course.



4. Ensure mental health promotion is integrated in the workplace

Workplaces directly influence the physical, mental, economic, and social wellbeing of workers and in turn, the health of their families, communities, and society. Being employed acts as a determinant for positive mental health. Additionally, it links several other determinants of mental health across the individual, family and community, and structural areas including contributing to a sense of self-worth and mastery, economic security, and social and gender equality (WHO). Conversely, the workplace can also be a source of job-related stress and anxiety, highlighting the negative effects of issues such as workplace bullying and extreme workloads. The importance of positive mental health in the workplace is recognised in *Healthy Ireland at Work: A National Framework for Healthy Workplaces in Ireland*. This framework highlights the need for workplace policies and supports that enable a positive work environment for mental health and wellbeing. The objectives within this goal build on the Healthy Ireland at Work Framework and also consider the needs of unemployed people.

- Objective 1:** Support healthy workplaces by integrating mental health promotion into workplace health and wellbeing initiatives.
- Objective 2:** Encourage and facilitate the creation of work environments that are supportive of mental health and wellbeing through appropriate policy initiatives.
- Objective 3:** Increase access to mental health support at work for employees experiencing mental health problems to help ensure they remain in the workforce.
- Objective 4:** Support the enhancement of social protection policies and Active Labour Market programmes for unemployed people.

Section 5: Pathways to Wellbeing: High-level Goals and Objectives continued



5. Address the social determinants of mental health and reduce mental health inequities, especially for disadvantaged, marginalised and vulnerable groups

A focus on equity and addressing the wider determinants of mental health and wellbeing is central to cross-government action to support population level mental health and wellbeing. Discrimination, racism, and social exclusion negatively impact not only the general population but also specific priority groups in numerous ways, resulting in a confounding effect on mental health and wellbeing. The wider social, economic, commercial, cultural and environmental determinants of mental health, including access to money, education, fair work, housing, transport, the built and natural environment, can have a significant impact on mental health and wellbeing and act as drivers of inequalities. To address inequalities in mental health, action needs to be taken not just in health policy but across the whole of Government. The objectives within this goal connect and align with other Government departments to ensure that reducing mental health inequalities is at the forefront of thinking across Government.

- Objective 1:
Scale up and strengthen existing mental health promotion initiatives for disadvantaged, marginalised and vulnerable population groups.
- Objective 2:
Counter the negative impact of discrimination, racism, and social exclusion on the population's mental health and wellbeing through action across relevant Government Departments.
- Objective 3:
Strengthen social protection, welfare, and community empowerment measures to support population groups living in poverty and increase access to a continuum of supports that will promote and protect the mental health and wellbeing of low-income individuals and families.
- Objective 4:
Promote the importance of access to quality housing and the home environment in supporting positive mental health and wellbeing.



6. Mainstream mental health promotion across government policies and programmes

To advance a 'mental health in all policies approach', there is a need to mainstream mental health promotion into all government policies and programmes that have a health and wellbeing relevance.³⁰ A key component of this is to act through, and align with, the Government's *Wellbeing Framework for Ireland* and to build on cross-government implementation structures currently in place to support the delivery of *Healthy Ireland, Sharing the Vision* and *Connecting for Life* both nationally and locally. There is also a need to ensure that mental health promotion is integrated into routine health care while increasing public awareness of what mental health promotion is through communication campaigns and public messaging models.

- Objective 1:
Strengthen the integration of mental health promotion within national and local policies and plans that impact on health and wellbeing.
- Objective 2:
Develop a cross-sectoral approach to increasing public awareness of mental health and wellbeing through national communication campaigns.
- Objective 3:
Ensure mental health promotion is integrated into the delivery of routine healthcare.

³⁰ Barry, M.M., Keppler, T., Sheridan, A. (2023). Development of the National Mental Health Promotion Plan: Report prepared for the Department of Health, Ireland. Health Promotion Research Centre, University of Galway

Section 6
Implementation of Pathways to Wellbeing

The implementation of *Pathways to Wellbeing* will be driven by Healthy Ireland in the Department of Health, which will oversee the cross-sectoral engagement and delivery of agreed objectives and actions set out in the plan. This will require the establishment of appropriate governance and implementation structures and will be underpinned by four pillars with key deliverables.

Strategic Leadership Pillar

- > Appoint a National Policy Lead for Mental Health Promotion within the Department of Health to drive implementation.
- > Develop a detailed implementation plan in partnership with key stakeholders and relevant agencies, building on the priority actions already identified.
- > Develop and deliver a communication campaign to promote positive mental health at a population level.
- > Conduct an analysis of the mental health promotion professional development needs of frontline staff working across sectors and develop a training and professional development plan.
- > Explore opportunities to enhance mental health promotion on a Shared Island basis.
- > Ensure a mid-term review of the implementation of the plan is prioritised.

Cross Government Pillar

- > Develop a collaborative structure to support a whole-of-government approach to promoting positive mental health.
- > Establish structures for monitoring delivery of actions with other government departments.
- > Develop a plan to communicate the vision for mental health promotion across all government departments, to ensure it is embedded in future policy development.

Partnership Pillar

- > Establish a mental health promotion network to represent the community and voluntary sector, and other stakeholders working in mental health promotion, to enable cross-sectoral collaboration.
- > Increase resources for key mental health promotion initiatives including social prescribing, community-based initiatives, youth mental health promotion and parenting supports in collaboration with community and voluntary sector.
- > Identify the resources required to deliver targeted mental health promotion interventions to support key initiatives including the Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programme.
- > Establish a coordination mechanism across all relevant policy areas within the Department of Health, HSE and other relevant bodies to shape, align and sustain strategic actions for mental health promotion.

Research and Evidence Pillar

- > Strengthen the evidence base nationally through supporting implementation and evaluation research on mental health promotion interventions and the development of knowledge translation.
- > Identify opportunities to increase funding for research on mental health promotion across the research sector.
- > Establish a national dataset of indicators to measure the positive mental health and wellbeing of the population so that the impact of the plan can be assessed.

Appendix 1

Linking Policies and Departments



Appendix 2

National Mental Health Promotion Plan Oversight Group

The membership of the National Mental Health Promotion Oversight Group comprised representatives from government departments, agencies, advocacy groups, service providers, and mental health professionals.

The Terms of Reference of the group were to:

- > Oversee the development of the National Mental Health Promotion Plan.
- > Provide strategic direction, advice, and input into to the development of the plan.
- > Consider the role of other Government Departments in terms of mental health promotion and agree process of engagement.
- > Identify key stakeholders and potential partnerships to support the development of the plan.
- > Agree priorities for inclusion in the National Mental Health Promotion Plan.

Membership of the Group

- > Department of Health (DoH)
- > Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY)
- > Department of Justice (DoJ)
- > Department of Education (DoE)
- > TUSLA
- > HSE Health and Wellbeing
- > HSE, National Office for Suicide Prevention
- > Mental Health Ireland
- > Jigsaw
- > Higher Education Authority
- > Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media (DTCGASM)
- > Representative with Lived Experience
- > University of Galway

Appendix 3

Summary of Agreed Objectives and Actions for *Pathways to Wellbeing*



High Level Goal:
Strengthen foundations for positive mental health in early years

Objective 1: Increase access to antenatal and postnatal supports that improve maternal and infant mental wellbeing.

No.	Action	Lead	Supporting Partners
1.	Seek to embed mental health promotion as a component of practitioner training and throughout their professional career.	DoH	HSE
2.	Strengthen the implementation of both universal and targeted evidence-based ante-natal and post-natal interventions, specifically for mothers most at risk of mental health difficulties.	HSE, DoH	HSE, DCEDIY, Tusla
3.	Develop guidelines to support government departments to assess if and how new policies and initiatives can contribute to the positive mental health of women during and after the period of maternity.	DoH	HSE, Tusla, All departments

Objective 2: Identify the enablers and supports that improve infant social and emotional development in the early years in policy, and practice.

No.	Action	Lead	Supporting Partners
1.	Continue to prioritise childhood social and emotional development to new and existing policies relating to infancy and early years.	DCEDIY, DoH	DoH, Tusla, HSE
2.	In collaboration with delivery partners, embed a ‘mental wellbeing focus’ into interventions targeted at families at higher risk of disadvantage.	DCEDIY	DoH, DSP, Tusla, HSE

Objective 3:
Work to mainstream a positive mental health focus into parenting supports.

No.	Action	Lead	Supporting Partners
1.	Support parents in the home and the community through the continued development and implementation of evidence-based and culturally competent universal and targeted parenting programmes.	DCEDIY, HSE	DoH, Tusla, DSP
2.	Increase coverage of home-visiting programmes nationally and embed a mental health and wellbeing focus.	DCEDIY, HSE	Tusla



High Level Goal:
Enhance children’s and young people’s social and emotional development

Objective 1: Equip those professionals working in early learning and care, primary, post-primary, third level education and voluntary youth & community services to better support the social and emotional development of children and young people through professional development learning opportunities.

No.	Action	Lead	Supporting Partners
1.	Continue to ensure the integration of mental health awareness, wellbeing and children’s social and emotional development in initial and continuous professional development training programmes for early years educators and school-age childcare practitioners.	DCEDIY, DoE, HSE	
2.	Explore how we can raise awareness about the impact education can have on promoting positive mental wellbeing as part of the professional development of staff delivering tertiary education.	DFHERIS	DoH, DoE, NGOs
3.	Promote mental health literacy and social and emotional skills development through teacher professional learning and in-service training for primary and post-primary teachers and school leaders.	DoE	DoH, OIDE
4.	Explore how all programmes of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) can incorporate the core element of Global Citizenship Education, which includes Education for Sustainable Development; Wellbeing (personal and community); Social Justice, Interculturalism.	DoE	DoH
5.	Strengthen training in Youth Mental Health Promotion for all voluntary and community organisations offering community-based youth provision.	DoH	NGOs
6.	Work with CORU to ensure mental health and wellbeing is integrated into education and training for health and social care professionals.	DoH	HSE, DCEDIY, DSP, Tusla, CORU
7.	Promote the benefits of mental health promotion to voluntary and community organisations providing community-based recreational service to children and young people.	DCEDIY	DoH, NGOs, DRCD, HSE, Tusla
8.	Review and enhance the delivery of Healthy Ireland Smart Start (HISS) Programme, working with ELC settings to support the development of child health and wellbeing, through phased expansion of this programme to all ELC settings.	HSE	DoH, DCEDIY

Appendix 3: Summary of Agreed Objectives and Actions for Pathways to Wellbeing continued



High Level Goal:
Enhance children’s and young people’s social and emotional development continued

Objective 2: Improve opportunities for the social and emotional development of children and young people through universal statutory and non-statutory programmes and supports.			
No.	Action	Lead	Supporting Partners
1.	Support the social and emotional development of children and young people through SPHE teaching and learning.	DoE	HSE
2.	Continue to ensure a focus on children's wellbeing including social and emotional development in early learning and care and school settings nationally, and that this focus is supported throughout existing curricular and associated support frameworks.	DCEDIY	DoE
3.	Work with relevant groups to develop a diverse programme of awareness-raising initiatives to prevent and address bullying in schools.	DoE	DoH, HSE, DCEDIY
4.	Identify and initiate further research on preventing and addressing bullying to support the dissemination of good practice and provide evidence for further policy development and decision-making.	DoE	DoH, HSE, DCEDIY
5.	Support the implementation of targeted anxiety and depression prevention interventions in school settings, including climate change anxiety.	DoE	DoH, HSE
6.	Continue to invest in personal social development programmes for children and young people that reflect on their needs and the local context they live in.	DCEDIY	
7.	Invest in the development, implementation, and evaluation of social and emotional development programmes for children and young people in education settings.	DoE	
8.	Provide a directory of CPD for schools which includes appropriate programmes provided by the Department of Education and its agencies to support social, emotional, and behavioural development.	DoE	OIDE
9.	Embed mental health promotion in alternative education programmes that target young people not in education, training, or employment.	DoH	DCEDIY, DFHERIS, ETBI
10.	Ensure services with a remit to provide information have access to and include relevant, culturally appropriate, and evidence-based material on youth mental health promotion.	HSE, DoH	DCEDIY
11.	Examine the ongoing work aimed at promoting student mental health and social & emotional wellbeing in further and higher education with a view to how it can contribute to future policy decisions.	DFHERIS	SOLAS, HSE, DoH, HEIs, HEA, ETBI
12.	Improve the effectiveness of Pathways to Wellbeing by creating opportunities that ensure the voices of children and young people are central to decision-making concerning their mental wellbeing.	DoH	DCEDIY, HSE, Tusla, NGOs
13.	Develop, review and update current guidelines issued to schools to support children and young people with behaviour, emotional and social difficulty (BESD) and develop implementation plans to accompany these supports.	DoE	DoH



High Level Goal:
Enhance children’s and young people’s social and emotional development continued

Objective 3: Provide targeted social, emotional, and behaviour support to ensure that the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people most at risk of developing mental health difficulties are addressed.			
No.	Action	Lead	Supporting Partners
1.	Increase access to social and emotional learning programmes aimed at improving social and emotional competencies in 0-5 year old children in disadvantaged areas.	DCEDIY	DoH, Tusla, HSE
2.	Ensure social and emotional supports are age-appropriate and are tailored to meet the needs of disadvantaged children and young people in the context of universal provision.	DCEDIY	DRCD, DoH, DoE, HSE, HSE, Tusla
3.	Deliver wellbeing and resilience training and supports in schools so that children and young people experience a sense of belonging, feel safe, connected and supported.	DoE	DoH, Tusla, HSE
4.	Develop and implement a pilot programme of counselling and wellbeing supports for primary school pupils.	DoE	DoH
5.	Increase access to targeted anxiety and depression prevention and early intervention approaches for young people at higher risk.	HSE	DCEDIY, DoH, NGOs

Objective 4: Promote the benefits of lifelong learning opportunities that support mental health and wellbeing across the life course.			
No.	Action	Lead	Supporting Partners
1.	Examine initiatives that enhance access to lifelong learning opportunities and consider opportunities for further development as part of the National Skills Strategy.	DFHERIS	DETE, SOLAS
2.	Promote enhanced understanding of mental wellbeing in family literacy and family learning programmes, building the capacity and confidence of parents to support their children's learning.	DFHERIS	DCEDIY, DoE, DoH, DSP, SOLAS/NALA, ETBI
3.	Promote the inclusion of mental health and wellbeing awareness across tertiary education.	DFHERIS	DoH, SOLAS, ETBI, HEA

Appendix 3: Summary of Agreed Objectives and Actions for Pathways to Wellbeing continued



High Level Goal:
Strengthen community belonging and connectedness

Objective 1: Promote positive mental health and wellbeing across the life course through community engagement and empowerment programmes, especially for vulnerable groups.			
No.	Action	Lead	Supporting Partners
1.	Strengthen the implementation of mental health promotion in community settings through mentoring programmes, social action, cultural participation, and nature-based interventions, including outdoor adventures and sports.	DoH	DoH, HSE, DoE, DSP, NGOs, DCRD, DTCAGSM
2.	Strengthen access opportunities to evidence-based interventions for older people and groups affected by poverty and social exclusion.	DoH	DCRD, HSE, DTCAGSM, NGOs, DSP
3.	Increase access to mental health promotion programmes to support positive mental health within the prison population.	DoJ, DoH	HSE, NGOs
4.	Increase the use of mental health promotion programmes as a targeted intervention for diverting those with mental health difficulties away from the criminal justice system.	DoJ, HSE	DoH
5.	Strengthen access to mental health and wellbeing support through existing structures for people experiencing domestic, sexual, and gender-based violence.	DoJ, HSE	DoH, NGOs, Community groups, Tusla
6.	Identify and address the mental health needs of priority groups through targeted and evidenced initiatives.	DoH	HSE

Objective 2: Extend the reach of social prescribing for marginalised and vulnerable groups in the community as a vehicle for improving mental health.			
No.	Action	Lead	Supporting Partners
1.	Work with providers of social prescribing initiatives to promote and make available their services to priority groups as a means of increasing the participation of these groups.	HSE	DoJ, DSP, DRCD, DoH, Creative Ireland
2.	Secure cross-departmental funding to develop, implement and increase the reach of social prescribing programmes.	DoH	HSE, DSP, DRCD, DoJ, Creative Ireland



High Level Goal:
Strengthen community belonging and connectedness continued

Objective 3: Work in partnership with key community stakeholders to implement a range of social networking, social capital, and other supports that promote mental health and wellbeing through cross-community engagement.			
No.	Action	Lead	Supporting Partners
1.	Promote social connection by reducing social isolation and exclusion through the development and implementation of a range of interventions in collaboration with key stakeholders.	DOH	DTCAGSM, DCEDIY, DSP, DRCD, HSE, NGOs, DAFM, LCDCs
2.	Continue to drive the implementation of the Creative Ireland Programme as an all-of-government, culture-based, wellbeing initiative.	DTCAGSM, DoH	HSE, Arts Council
3.	Support the use of national parks to promote positive wellbeing.	DoHLG&H	NPWS
4.	Promote the benefits associated with sport, physical exercise and active lifestyles for the long-term mental health and well-being of all sections of our community, young and old.	DoH	HSE, DTCAGSM, Sports Ireland

Objective 4: Develop and implement digital supports for promoting mental health across the life course.		
No.	Action	Lead
1.	Support the implementation of the Digital Mental Health Strategy through the provision of evidence-based mental health promotion intervention and supports at a population level	DOH, HSE

Appendix 3: Summary of Agreed Objectives and Actions for Pathways to Wellbeing continued



High Level Goal:
Ensure mental health promotion is integrated in the workplace

Objective 1: Support healthy workplaces by integrating mental health promotion into workplace health and wellbeing initiatives.			
No.	Action	Lead	Supporting Partners
1.	Work collaboratively across government and with employment, trade and enterprise organisations to mainstream and embed mental wellbeing awareness into workplace training.	DoH	DFHERIS, HEA, SOLAS
2.	Ensure the availability and implementation of evidence-based mental health promotion interventions for workplaces.	DoH	DETE, HSE, Academic Institutions
3.	Strengthen and expand the delivery of interventions that raise mental health awareness in the workplace for both managers and employees.	DoH	DETE, HSE
4.	Develop guidelines for workplaces on assessing and transforming organisational culture to promote mental health and wellbeing.	DoH	DETE, HSE

Objective 2: Encourage and facilitate the creation of work environments that are supportive of mental health and well-being through appropriate policy initiatives.			
No.	Action	Lead	Supporting Partners
1.	Develop national guidelines that will support workplace management to create mentally healthy workplace environments.	DoH	DETE
2.	Support businesses in managing work-related stress, psychosocial hazards and bullying, through the development of guidance, eLearning tools and awareness raising.	DoH	DETE, DSP
3.	Support organisations identify ways to improve employee wellbeing through the promotion of tools such as the HSA's Work Positive tool to improve the management of work-related stressors and reduce hazards and risks with psychosocial factors at work.	DoH	DETE, DSP



High Level Goal:
Ensure mental health promotion is integrated in the workplace continued

Objective 3: Increase access to mental health support at work for employees experiencing mental health problems to help ensure they remain in the workforce.			
No.	Action	Lead	Supporting Partners
1.	Develop cross-government approaches to strengthen legislation and regulations in protecting and supporting the rights of workers with mental health difficulties and disabilities and their access to employment.	DoH	DETE, HSE, DSP, DCEDIY
2.	Implement recommendations in Sharing the Vision to support those with mental health difficulties, and other disabilities, to have access to supported employment work schemes, including individual placement opportunities.	DoH	DETE, HSE, DSP

Objective 4: Support the enhancement of social protection policies and Active Labour Market programmes for unemployed people.			
No.	Action	Lead	Supporting Partners
1.	Explore the opportunity to embed evidence-based mental health promotion interventions into statutory training and employment schemes that will promote and protect the mental health and wellbeing of those who are unemployed.	DFHERIS	DoH, DSP, DETE, DoE

Appendix 3: Summary of Agreed Objectives and Actions for Pathways to Wellbeing continued



High Level Goal:
Address the social determinants of mental health and reduce mental health inequities, especially for disadvantaged, marginalised and vulnerable groups

Objective 1: Scale up and further strengthen existing mental health promotion initiatives for disadvantaged, marginalised and vulnerable population groups.			
No.	Action	Lead	Supporting Partners
1.	Ensure that appropriate mental health promotion resources consider the needs of speakers of Irish and other languages.	DoH	All government departments
2.	Support the positive mental health of migrants through social inclusion initiatives	DCEDIY	DoH, DSP, Immigrant Council of Ireland

Objective 2: Counter the negative impact of discrimination, racism, and social exclusion on the population's mental health and wellbeing through across relevant Government Departments.			
No.	Action	Lead	Supporting Partners
1.	Review the impact of discrimination and social exclusion on mental health, in consultation with other departments, and develop an appropriate policy response.	DoH	All government departments
2.	Strengthen the integration of mental health promotion into the implementation of plans, policies, resources, and activities that focus on the health and wellbeing of priority groups.	DoH	HSE, DoJ, DSP, Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre
3.	Strengthen the integration of mental health promotion into the implementation of plans, policies, resources, and activities that focus on the health and wellbeing of people who use drugs.	DoH	HSE
4.	Develop and implement a costed, time-bound national stigma reduction programme which aims to reduce stigma and discrimination towards those affected by mental health difficulties as per Recommendation 7 in Sharing the Vision.	DoH, HSE	NGOs
5.	We will explore ways to improve the mental health and well-being of women and girls in alignment with the work of the Women's Health Taskforce and the priorities identified in the Women's Health Action Plans.	DoH	HSE



High Level Goal:
Address the social determinants of mental health and reduce mental health inequities, especially for disadvantaged, marginalised and vulnerable groups continued

Objective 3: Strengthen social protection, welfare, and community empowerment measures to support population groups living in poverty and increase access to a continuum of supports that will promote and protect the mental health and wellbeing of low-income individuals and families.			
No.	Action	Lead	Supporting Partners
1.	Continue access to debt advice, support, and guidance to support the mental health of individuals and families who encounter financial difficulties.	DSP	DoJ, DRCD, DFIN
2.	Integrate positive mental health and wellbeing measures into public health, family and parental assistance, and wellbeing services, with a focus on children living in poverty.	DoH	DT, DSP, DCEDIY

Objective 4: Promote the importance of access to quality housing and the home environment in supporting positive mental health and wellbeing.			
No.	Action	Lead	Supporting Partners
1.	Increase access to integrated services and a continuum of supports for protecting the mental health and wellbeing of families and individuals who are living with or at risk of homelessness.	DOH	HSE, DSP, DHLGH
2.	Work with other departments to embed a focus on the population's mental wellbeing in local planning, housing, and living environment improvement schemes.	DoH	DoT, DRCD, DECC, DSP, local authorities
3.	Strengthen programmes that enable older people to remain in their homes for longer and have access to the right health and community supports.	DoH	DHLGH, Local Authorities, Housing Agencies.
4.	Strengthen strategic approaches, initiatives and joint protocols to enable those temporarily accommodated by the HSE to effectively transition to community living.	DoH	HSE, DHLGH, Local Authorities, and Housing Providers.

Appendix 3: Summary of Agreed Objectives and Actions for Pathways to Wellbeing continued



High Level Goal:
Mainstream mental health promotion across government policies and programmes

Objective 1: Strengthen the mainstreaming of mental health promotion within national and local policies and plans that impact on health and wellbeing.

No.	Action	Lead	Supporting Partners
1.	Integrate mental health promotion into routine primary care, mental health services and health services to encourage and ensure parity of esteem for mental and physical health.	DoH	HSE
2.	Embed mental health promotion and prevention across primary care and acute hospital settings.	HSE	DoH

Objective 2: Develop a cross-sectoral approach to increasing public awareness of mental health and wellbeing through national communications campaigns.

No.	Action	Lead	Supporting Partners
1.	Embed an enhanced focus on mental health and wellbeing within grant aid agreements and local community interagency structures.	DoH, HSE	Other government departments, NGO partners
2.	Include mental health promotion messaging in the forthcoming national communications campaign aimed at improving the mental health literacy of the population.	HSE	DoH, NGO partners, DECC
3.	Develop a communications strategy for the lifetime of Pathways to Wellbeing that will help our partners to understand and adopt the vision, objectives, and outcomes.	DoH	HSE

Objective 3: Ensure mental health promotion is integrated into the delivery of routine healthcare.

No.	Action	Lead	Supporting Partners
1.	Incorporate mental health promotion into the training received by health care staff.	HSE	DoH

Glossary of Abbreviations

CPD	Continuing Professional Development	DTCAGSM	Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media
DAFM	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	ETBI	Education and Training Boards Ireland
DCEDIY	Department of the Environment, Climate & Communications	ELC	Early Learning Centres
DECC	Department of Environment, Climate and Communications	HEA	Higher Education Authority
DETE	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment	HEI	Higher Education Institutions
DFHERIS	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science	HRB	Health Research Board
DFIN	Department of Finance	HSE	Health Service Executive
DHLGH	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	LCDC	Local Community Development Committees
DoE	Department of Education	NALA	National Adult Literacy Agency
DoH	Department of Health	NGOs	National Government Organisations
DoJ	Department of Justice	OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
DRCD	Department of Rural & Community Development	SPHE	Social Personal Health Education
DSP	Department of Social Protection	WHO	World Health Organisation
DT	Department of the Taoiseach		

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