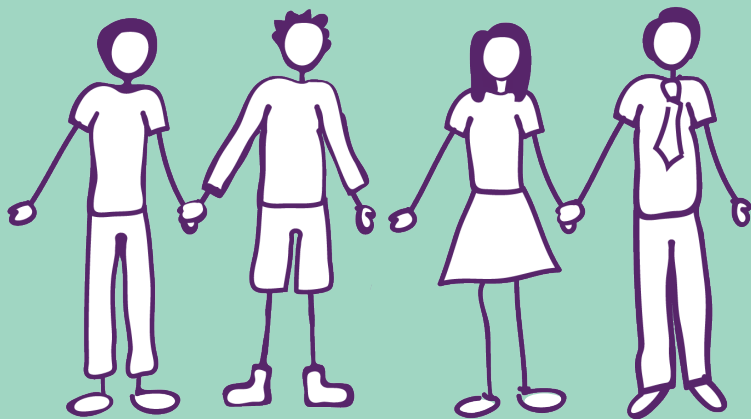


Gofal policy and public affairs framework

2015-18



Our policy and public affairs work

At Gofal, we aim to use our profile to improve the lives of people living with or at risk of experiencing mental ill health. Over the past few years we have successfully influenced policy and legislation across health, social services, housing and criminal justice, working with Welsh Government Ministers, officials, Assembly Members and partner organisations to effect change. As we move forward with a new strategic plan we want to ensure that we continue to make a difference to public policy and service delivery.

We also want our policy and public affairs work to be guided by strong values, whether we are developing formal consultation responses, interacting with politicians or putting our message across in the media. As a result, we are making a commitment to place Gofal's organisational aspirations at the heart of all we do:

- **Work with integrity and dignity;**
Ensure that all of our policy and public affairs work is approached with integrity and that we continue to campaign for all people with mental health problems to be treated with respect and dignity.
- **Inspire and support people to exceed their expectations;**
Support front line staff, service users and carers to engage with our policy and public affairs work, inspiring people to be part of our campaigns and praising them for their contributions.
- **Develop a culture that is embracing and respectful of difference;**
Stand up for all parts of society that experience mental health problems, especially and including those who face the largest inequalities and the biggest discrimination.
- **Communicate honestly and openly;**
Be honest with decision makers when we disagree with their policies, while protecting Gofal's reputation and our ability to influence change.
- **Be an organisation that is ambitious, creative and determined;**
Strive to change people's lives through our policy and public affairs work, embracing challenges and using creativity to get our message across.
- **Create environments that are collaborative, supportive and empowering;**
Work in partnership with service users, carers, front line staff members and partner organisations to strengthen our policy and campaigning work.
- **Be respected for our knowledge and expertise**
Support and strengthen our public affairs work with research and case studies.



Ewan Hilton
Chief
Executive



Louise Evans
Director of
Services



Katie Dalton
Policy and Public
Affairs Manager

Priorities determined by the people we support

As we embark on the delivery of Gofal's next strategic plan we want to ensure that our policy and public affairs work continues to reflect the key issues facing the people we support. With this in mind, we asked our service users the following two questions:

- **What three things would improve mental health services?**
- **What three things would improve your mental health and wellbeing?**

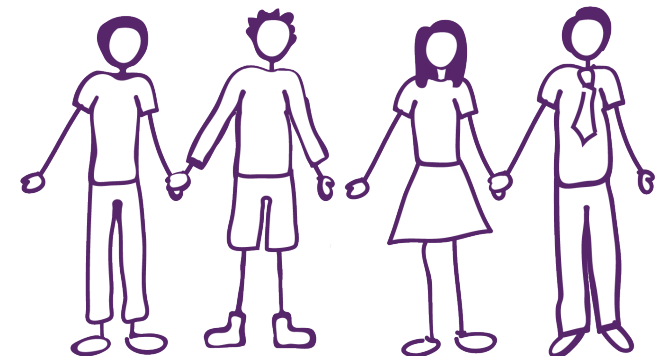
We received over 70 responses that touched on all areas of people's lives, with a number of common themes emerging. The next few pages set out a number of broad areas that are important to the people we support, along with the policy/political context.

However, this work exists in an ever-changing political environment, especially with both UK and Welsh general elections on the horizon. As a result, this document will act as a broad framework, which will allow us to respond to emerging issues as they crop up. Each year we will determine specific actions and projects based on the external environment facing both Gofal and our service users, as well as being flexible and responsive to the national policy agenda.

If you want to share your views about any of these issue please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Katie Dalton

Policy and Public Affairs Manager
katiedalton@gofal.org.uk



Access to health professionals and services

"Trying to get appointments with the GP is difficult."

"Regular reviews of medication."

"Easier to get appointments"

"More information / support."

"Regular appointments."

"Less medication, more alternatives."

"Shorter waiting lists for therapy."

"Being able to contact somebody out of hours."

"Better communication between patient and doctor."

"Working closer with patient, not short 15 minute appointments."

"More frequent appointments with mental health team."

"Easier and faster access to secondary services."

"More community doctors, psychiatrists and CPNs."

"Better signposting for services."

"Longer appointments with GP."

"Keeping the same doctor for each appointment."

"More mental health nurses based at GPs."

Context - Policy, politics and partnerships

- Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010 - aims to improve primary and secondary mental health services.
- Together for Mental Health - aims to improve whole population mental health and mental health services.
- Political parties have expressed their commitment to improving mental health and giving it parity with physical health.
- Wales Mental Health in Primary Care (RCGP sub group) - also focused on improving primary mental health care.
- Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act.



Vaughan Gething AM
Deputy Minister
for Health



Mark Drakeford AM
Minister for Health &
Social Services

We will...

- Hold the Welsh Government to account over the delivery of the Mental Health (Wales) Measure and Together for Mental Health, informing amendments to legislation and development of delivery plans.
- Continue to conduct research into people's experiences of primary mental health services, using the results to lobby for improved services.
- Work with health boards to support service improvement and development.
- Work with WaMH in PC to support their work to improve primary mental health care.
- Lobby for increased investment in mental health services and effective use of the mental health funding ringfence.
- Use broadcast and print media to highlight the challenges facing people trying to access mental health services and to call for improvements.

Understanding, stigma and discrimination

"Learning and courses to help with mental health awareness."

"There is still a stigma."

"They don't listen to me."

"Better understanding."

"They haven't got time for me - I don't feel that they fully understand the problems as they don't take the time to hear me out."

"More education for people to learn about mental health."

"Listening properly with understanding."

"Opinion taken more seriously."

"Having GPs who have better understanding and insight into mental health issues - there is still a stigma about mental health."

"Being believed by authorities."

"I feel that... I am judged"

"Making everyone in workplaces, schools etc. aware of mental health problems."

Context - Policy, politics and partnerships

- Together for Mental Health high level outcome:
"The values, attitudes and skills of those treating or supporting individuals of all ages with mental health problems or mental illness are improved."
- Welsh Government commitment to achieve this outcome through funding the Time to Change Wales campaign.
- Continued cross party support for ending stigma.
- Time to Change Wales organisational pledge.
- Public Health (Wales) Bill.
- Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Bill.



Leighton Andrews AM
Minister for Public
Services



Mark Drakeford AM
Minister for Health &
Social Services

We will...

- Deliver, promote and support the Time to Change Wales campaign to end mental health stigma with our partners Hafal and Mind Cymru.
- Lobby political parties to fund Time to Change Wales beyond phase two.
- Work with membership organisations such as Wales TUC and NUS Wales to educate students and workers about mental health and tackle stigma.
- Use broadcast and print media to challenge stigma and discrimination.
- Continue to measure the understanding and empathy demonstrated by primary mental health professionals.
- Work with the Wales Alliance for Mental Health and Time to Change Wales to address stigma and discrimination in Welsh public services.
- Influence upcoming legislation to reduce inequalities facing people with mental health problems.

Housing and housing related support

"Suitable and affordable housing."

"Access to housing in a different area."

"My property needs decorating and my property is in disrepair."

"My housing situation - I'm 36 and still living out of bags."

"Improvement in housing repairs."

"My own place."

"Supported accommodation to help with everyday living and tasks."

"Increased support with housing."

"Better housing - bad housing had a severe detrimental impact on my mental health."

"If I was allocated a council/housing association property it would give me more security and peace of mind."

"Being more settled and having a permanent flat in the community."

"Access to appropriate social housing."

"More affordable housing."

Context - Policy, politics and partnerships

- Together for Mental Health - cross government, cross sector strategy covering all life areas.
- Mental Health (Wales) Measure - care and treatment plans include an accommodation section.
- Housing (Wales) Act.
- Renting Homes (Wales) Bill.
- Supporting People programme.
- Welfare reform.
- Transforming Rehabilitation.
- Welsh Housing Quality Standard.
- Empty Homes: Houses into Homes.



Lesley Griffiths AM
Minister for Communities
and Tackling Poverty

We will...

- Work with partner organisations to lobby the Welsh Government and opposition parties to protect Supporting People funding.
- Ensure that the interests of people with mental health problems are listened to and acted upon in the development and implementation of housing legislation and policy.
- Promote cross sector integration and third sector partnership working across health, housing and homelessness.
- Campaign for improved housing standards and monitor the implementation of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard.
- Promote a holistic, whole person approach to mental health and lobby for Care and Treatment Plans to include outcomes related to accommodation.
- Work to improve housing allocation for people with mental health problems.

Money, debt and social security

"Dealing with my debts and general finances."

"Finances make a huge impact and acquiring benefits is too challenging."

"It would improve my mental wellbeing if I did not have to be medically assessed for my ongoing long term condition."

"More money for bills."

"Not worrying about medical assessments all the time."

"Improvements to benefits system for mentally ill people."

"Finances - although I am receiving all the benefits I am entitled to I still struggle and have debts."

"Clearer information on housing related benefits letter and forms."

"Financial situation."

"Less stress around claiming benefits."

"More support RE: my debts."

"Knowing my benefits will remain stable. I fear I will lose out when it's reviewed. Debt will mean worry and I feel I will become unwell."

Context - Policy, politics and partnerships

- Mental Health (Wales) Measure - care and treatment plans include a 'finance and money' section.
- The vast majority of social security is non-devolved and lies with the UK Government.
- However, some aspects have been devolved as part of the welfare reform process.
- The Welsh Government has also made a commitment to try and mitigate the impacts of welfare reform.
- Many organisations are highlighting/campaigning on this issue and willing to work in partnership.



UK Government Ministers



Lesley Griffiths AM
Minister for Communities
and Tackling Poverty

We will...

- Continue to make representations about the negative impact of welfare reform on people with mental health problems.
- Work with other organisations and coalitions to raise awareness of this issues and to our help service users to access financial and debt advice services.
- Support service users to navigate the social security system and access the financial support they are entitled to.
- Promote a holistic, whole person approach to mental health and lobby for Care and Treatment Plans to include outcomes related to finance.
- Campaign for public donations to a Gofal crisis fund to provide support to the most vulnerable service users.
- Identify resources to provide specialist finance/welfare advice and support.

• • • Social, recreational and community interaction • • •

"Engaging more in activities and community based opportunities."

"Access gym - improve physical health."

"Access to more recreation classes."

"Help to improve community integration such as reduced/discount for rail fare."

"Reducing my isolation via community groups."

"To be able to live independently."

"Taking part regularly in activities"

"Having a bit more to do / staying active helps my health and wellbeing."

"More social activities."

"More support to get out and about and access community services."

"Gardening projects."

Context - Policy, politics and partnerships

- Together for Mental Health - cross government, cross sector strategy covering all life areas.
- Mental Health (Wales) Measure - care and treatment plans include sections on physical wellbeing and social activities.
- Public sector cuts - local authorities closing leisure services.
- Community groups campaigning against closure of local facilities.
- Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act
- Public Health (Wales) Bill.
- Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Bill.



Leighton Andrews AM
Minister for Public Services



Ken Skates AM
Deputy Minister for Culture and Sport

We will...

- Lobby the Ministers for Community, Public Services, Natural Resources, Sport and Culture to play their part in the delivery of Together for Mental Health.
- Promote a holistic, whole person approach to mental health and lobby for Care and Treatment Plans to include outcomes related to physical wellbeing and social, cultural and spiritual activities.
- Support campaigns to retain local community social and leisure facilities.
- Encourage health professionals to increase the use of exercise referrals.
- Use social media and our other communication channels to promote recreation and activity.
- Look at ways that we can extend our out-of-hours model.
- Influence the development and implementation of legislation such as the Public Health (Wales) Bill and Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Bill.

Education, work and volunteering

"More support to access and gain work or volunteering opportunities."

"Finding and securing employment."

"Find work."

"Learning opportunities."

"Good structure to my week that involves college, taking meds properly, spending time with family/friends and positive people."

"Build up confidence."

"Education/work."

"More/better education opportunities."

"Doing my voluntary work helps my mental health."

"Build up confidence.."

"Return to work."

"Volunteering."

"Return to college."

"To have a job."

Context - Policy, politics and partnerships

- Together for Mental Health - cross government, cross sector strategy covering all life areas.
- Mental Health (Wales) Measure - care and treatment plans include sections on education, training, work and occupation.
- Strong partnership with Wales TUC and existing materials for workers and trade unionists.
- Strong partnership with NUS Wales and existing materials for students.
- Welsh Government programmes to support access to education, work and training.



Edwina Hart AM
Minister for
Economy



Julie James AM
Deputy Minister
for Skills



Huw Lewis AM
Minister for
Education

We will...

- Lobby the Ministers for Education, Skills and the Economy to play their part in the delivery of Together for Mental Health.
- Promote a holistic, whole person approach to mental health and lobby for Care and Treatment Plans to include outcomes related to education, training, work and occupation.
- Continue to work with the Wales TUC and NUS Wales to increase understanding, reduce stigma and improve mental health and wellbeing in colleges, universities and the workplace.
- Support Time to Change Wales to tackle stigma in education and at work.
- Promote volunteer and work opportunities through our social enterprise.
- Lobby for government work programmes support people with mental health problems.

Who we are...

Gofal is a leading Welsh mental health and wellbeing charity. We provide a wide range of services to people with mental health problems, supporting their independence, recovery, health and wellbeing. We also lobby to improve mental health policy, practice and legislation, as well as campaigning to increase public understanding of mental health and wellbeing.

Our vision...

Delivering the best possible outcomes for people

Our mission...

To have a positive and lasting impact in all that we do:

- Working together to provide services that we can be proud of
- Ensuring that the voice of people using our services has a real and meaningful influence on our work
- Demonstrating outstanding practice in relation to staff mental health and wellbeing, learning and development
- Challenging the way we all think about, talk about and respond to mental health and wellbeing in all areas of our lives
- Using our profile, influence and voice to improve policy, practice and legislation
- Increasing the range and reach of our services through collaboration and targeted and sustainable business growth
- Spending our money where it will have the maximum impact

www.gofal.org.uk

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