

# EARLY INTERVENTION & PREVENTION ACTION PLAN UPDATE

## Mental Health Strategy 2021-2031

# 1

Winter 2024



## Intro

Welcome to this first newsletter to share information about the work underway, to deliver on Actions 1 and 2 of the Mental Health Strategy.

[Mental Health Strategy Early Intervention & Prevention Action Plan 2022-2025](#)



The Early Intervention & Prevention Action Plan (EI&P) which outlines the steps to deliver on Actions 1 and 2 of the Mental Health Strategy, was developed in 2022. The plan is focussed on enabling the promotion of good mental wellbeing for the population as a whole, taking early action with those who may be at greater risk and identifying needs early in order to provide support as soon as problems arise.

The plan recognises that there are a wide range of determinants which impact on mental health. and implementation of the plan requires cross-cutting working across all sectors.

The Public Health Agency (PHA) co-ordinates a collaborative approach to implement the plan led by a cross sectoral Steering Group and Sub Groups with membership from; a range of government departments, health & social care, the community & voluntary sector and academia.



## Data & Outcomes Framework

Work is well developed through the Data & Outcomes Sub Group to draft an outcomes framework which will provide a consistent way of measuring mental wellbeing at a population level and a toolkit to support measurement of outcomes at a programme level from interventions or services.

This work is being informed by a rapid review of approaches in other countries carried out by QUB and by evidence reviews from PHA Health Intelligence Team outlining the wider determinants which impact on mental health and the evidence of those population groups known to be at increased risk of poor mental health.

A number of engagement events are being arranged to seek views from stakeholders and partners in the coming months.

## Public Mental Health Learning Network

A virtual learning network for anyone with an interest in public mental health has been established on the Project ECHO platform.

Network members connect on a monthly basis via Zoom, each session has a specific topic and members can learn from each other and from expert speakers.

The introductory session held in May focussed on what is meant by public mental health and the topics for recent sessions have been the impact of poverty on mental health and inequalities in mental health.

You can find out more and register to join the ECHO network at the link below

<https://echonorthernireland.co.uk/public-mental-health-learning/>

Once you are a registered member you can watch previous sessions.

Work is underway to arrange a number of seminars and a conference in 2025, further information will feature in future newsletters.



# Communications & Public Awareness

A Digital Discovery exercise was carried out in April and May to explore the role of digital tools to support mental health promotion, early intervention and prevention in NI. More than 110 stakeholders were engaged in the process through one to one interviews, focus groups and workshops.

Reports from the digital discovery exercise have been shared with contributors and stakeholders. They present an analysis of the current digital landscape for mental health promotion and early intervention and outline a roadmap for the phased development of a Collaborative Mental Wellbeing Platform.

This will require a strong partnership approach and significant funding to progress. We are working with the Digital Mental Health Forum to identify potential avenues to take this forward.

The Public Health Agency (PHA) and Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts launched a mental health and emotional wellbeing campaign which ran in September and October urging people to prioritise workplace mental health and to take 10 minutes each day for self-care using the 'Take 5 steps to wellbeing'.

The campaign was widely supported across government departments, public bodies and across the business community.

More information is available about the HSC mental health campaign and the 'Take 5 steps to wellbeing' at [www.mindingyourhead.info](http://www.mindingyourhead.info)





# A Settings Approach - Student Mental Health



One element of the EI&P action plan focuses on settings based approaches, with students identified as a priority. Work is underway in partnership with the Department for the Economy to explore how mental health promotion and early intervention & prevention can be enhanced across universities, further education colleges and training providers.

PHA administered a small grants programme to support one off initiatives in these settings. Seventeen projects were supported, two within Universities, four within Further Education Colleges and eleven within Training Provider organisations.

Those projects included; enhanced training for staff; wellness days; one to one counselling services; awareness raising workshops; meaningful activities; connecting with nature trips and resilience programmes and toolkits.

## Student Mental Health Workshop

The Student Mental Health sub group held a workshop in late October to share learning, consider the outcomes from the small grant programme and to develop a work plan for the future.

The workshop was facilitated by Professor Mark Dooris, Emeritus Professor in Health & Sustainability, University of Central Lancashire and previous Chair of the UK Healthy Universities Network.

An Early Intervention & Prevention Student Mental Health Action Plan is being developed based on the outputs from the workshop.



# Quick Links- News & Resources

- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - New approaches to mental health challenges <https://www.oecd.org/>
- Safe Guarding Board NI trauma informed toolkit <https://www.safeguardingni.org/>
- NICE recommended digital therapies for depression and anxiety could free up thousands of NHS therapist hours | NICE <https://www.nice.org.uk/news/articles/>
- Mental Health Foundation; Experiences of Poverty stigma and Mental health in the UK <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/>
- Digital Adult Mental Health campaign launched <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/>
- December edition of the Family Support Hub Newsletter is now available <https://cypsp.hscni.net/download/>

For further information about anything detailed in this newsletter or to get involved please contact [mentalhealthEIPactionplan@hscni.net](mailto:mentalhealthEIPactionplan@hscni.net)

To ensure you continue to receive this newsletter join our stakeholder list sign up via the link - <https://forms.office.com/>

## Self-Care Tips

Connect with those around you over the holidays

Giving your time to someone and seeing your happiness linked to the community can be rewarding

