

Tayside Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Strategy 2026–2031

Living Life Well:
Our Redesigned Vision

Building Trust

Inspiring Hope

Improving Outcomes



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Building Trust, Inspiring Hope, Improving outcomes

Introduction

Everyone in Tayside has the right to experience the best mental health and wellbeing possible and should be able to get the right support, at the right time, in the right place, from the right person so they can live well and take part meaningfully in the life they choose.

This shared strategy sets out a vision for Mental Health and Learning Disability Services across Tayside. NHS Tayside and the Angus, Dundee, and Perth and Kinross Health and Social Care Partnerships are committed to working together to improve outcomes for local people. While each area has its own needs and priorities, we share a common purpose: reducing inequalities, improving health and wellbeing, and making the best use of available resources.

Demand for support continues to grow across Tayside, and some individuals and communities experience greater challenges and poorer outcomes than others. Addressing these inequalities need all services to take a joined-up approach. We know that mental health and wellbeing are shaped by many factors, including healthcare, social care, housing, education, employment and community connections. Families, carers, friends and wider support networks also play a vital role in helping people live the life they choose.

Our ambition is to provide support earlier and closer to home wherever possible. This strategy recognises the important contribution of social care services, health care, social work, housing providers, unpaid carers, community organisations and other partners. People achieve better outcomes when services work together and when they are actively involved in decisions about their care and support. That is why we will focus on prevention, early intervention and strengthening support within local communities.

We also recognise that some people need specialist care and support. When this is the case, they should be able to access the right services quickly and in the most appropriate setting. Where it is safe and suitable, people should be supported in their own homes and communities rather than in hospital. Hospital services will continue to provide specialist care when needed, but our aim is to avoid unnecessary hospital stays and help people return to their local communities and homes as soon as possible.

Over the next five years, we will work with people who use services, their families and carers, our staff, local communities and partner organisations to improve access to support and strengthen services. Future planning will be based on local needs, evidence, lived experience and a commitment to reducing inequalities. By working together across health, social care, housing and community organisations, we can provide more joined-up support that meets people's needs.

At the heart of this strategy is a commitment to listening to people and working together. We want everyone who uses, delivers or supports services to feel heard, valued and treated with dignity and respect. Together, we will continue to develop services that help people remain connected to their communities and achieve what matters most to them. Our aim is that people feel supported when they need help, have hope for the future, and are able to live the best lives possible.

What this means for the people of Tayside

Our mental health and learning disabilities strategy sets out our vision of how we will support people of any age with mental health conditions, learning disabilities, dementia, neurodevelopmental conditions, and alcohol or substance-related use. These are the broad population groups we include in our mental health and learning disabilities. We will make sure people in Tayside with these needs can get help from services when they need it.

Everyone who uses our services, whatever their age, will be welcomed with kindness and respect. We will recognise the impact that trauma can have on people's lives, value neurodiversity, and provide support while people are waiting for services. Our aim is to make sure people can get the help they need when they need it.

We will provide more care and treatment closer to home and within local communities. Hospitals care will be provided when needed but hospitals will not be seen as homes. They should provide specialist assessment, treatment and care for people with the most complex needs and as soon as possible, people will be supported to get the support they need in their own homes and communities. We will also use digital services where they improve access and choice.

We will listen to people who use our services and involve them in planning, designing and improving care. Their lived experience will help shape the way services are developed. Families and carers will be valued and treated as equal partners. We recognise them as our 'Experts by Experience'.

We are committed to improving outcomes and reducing inequalities across Tayside. We will provide high-quality joined-up care that is timely, fair, effective and based on the best evidence available. We will support people to participate as they are able in their local communities. We will help people achieve the goals that matter most to them and support them to live the life they choose.

What this means for MHL D Services in Tayside

All services that support people with mental health and learning disabilities play an important role in improving health and wellbeing across Tayside. We will focus on working together, preventing problems from getting worse, reducing inequalities, and helping people access support closer to home. Our services will focus on what matters most to each person and on achieving the outcomes that are important to them.

Our staff are our greatest strength. We recognise them as our 'Experts by Profession'. We will make sure they have the skills, training, support and leadership they need to provide compassionate, person-centred, trauma-informed and rights-based care. Staff working across the NHS, local authorities, the third sector, independent care services, and unpaid carers all play an important role. By working together, we will provide joined-up support for the people of Tayside.

Healthcare services will provide the same high standard of care and treatment wherever people live, so everyone can access support in a similar way across Tayside. To help with this, NHS Tayside is bringing healthcare services for people with mental health and learning disabilities together under one leadership structure. This change will help all healthcare staff work more closely together and provide more consistent support for people across Tayside.

Staff and services will make sure that everyone receives the same high standard of care and support, regardless of their age or where they live. This means that all staff and services offering support and care will work more closely together to meet people's needs and provide the right support at the right time.

We will introduce new arrangements to strengthen leadership, accountability and decision-making across services. NHS Tayside, Health and Social Care Partnerships, local authorities, third sector organisations and other partners will work more closely together to improve services and deliver better outcomes for local communities.

Everyone involved in supporting people with mental health needs and learning disabilities will work across professional and organisational boundaries. People and their families will be at the centre of decisions about their care. We will follow the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and Getting it Right for Everyone (GIRFE) to make sure support is joined up and focused on achieving the outcomes that matter most to individuals and families. Care and treatment will be matched to each person's needs, with people receiving the right level of support at the right time.

We will create a culture of learning, improvement and innovation. By working in partnership and using evidence to guide our decisions, we will continue to improve services and help people in Tayside live healthy, fulfilling and independent lives. The way we deliver care will build trust, inspire hope and improve outcomes for the people we serve.

Our Ambition

By 2031, people in Tayside will have better access to support, more care delivered in their communities, get specialist support when needed, and have improved health and wellbeing outcomes. Staff will feel valued and supported, services will work more effectively together, and Mental Health and Learning Disability Services will provide consistent, high-quality care across Tayside.

We will work together across organisational boundaries to improve outcomes. We recognise that NHS Tayside, the three Health and Social Care Partnerships, local authorities, the third sector, independent providers, people with lived experience, families and carers all have an important role to play in delivering this vision. By planning services together and focusing on what matters most to people, we can provide more joined-up, person-centred and sustainable support.

By working together and learning from people's experiences, we will continue to improve our services. We want people across Tayside to receive safe, high-quality support that meets their needs and helps them live well. By working in partnership, we can build trust, offer hope for the future, and help people achieve better outcomes.

Case for Change

The people of Angus, Dundee and Perth and Kinross have different needs, which affect their health and wellbeing.

Angus and Perth and Kinross have older populations than Scotland as a whole. Around one in four people in these areas are aged 65 or over, compared with one in five across Scotland. This number is expected to grow in the years ahead. As people get older, the risk of developing

dementia increases. NHS Tayside also has one of the highest rates of new dementia diagnoses in Scotland.

Dundee has a younger population but faces higher levels of poverty and deprivation than other parts of Tayside. Around 37% of people in Dundee live in some of Scotland's most deprived communities, compared with 7% in Angus and 6% in Perth and Kinross. People living in more deprived areas are more likely to experience mental health problems such as anxiety and depression and are at greater risk of substance use problems and suicide. Dundee also has some of the highest rates of substance-related hospital admissions, substance-related deaths and suicides in Scotland.

Perth and Kinross also have higher suicide rates than the Scottish average, with some communities facing additional challenges because of rural isolation. Across the UK and Europe, there has also been a growing concern about the mental health of children and young people, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic.

These challenges show why Tayside needs a strong focus on prevention, early support and reducing inequalities. We need services that respond to local needs, support people earlier, and help people stay well in their communities whenever possible.

Tayside needs Mental Health and Learning Disability Services that are easy to access, joined up and able to meet changing needs. Demand for services is increasing, more people are living longer, and many people need support with complex and long-term issues. We also know that some communities experience poorer health outcomes and greater barriers to getting help.

To respond to these challenges, we need to focus more on prevention, early support and care within local communities. Services must work closely together to provide support that is centred on the person and what matters most to them.

What are our strategic aims (2026-2031)

NHS Tayside, Angus, Dundee and Perth & Kinross Health and Social Care Partnerships will work together to improve outcomes for people with mental health needs and learning disabilities. While local communities have different needs and priorities, we share a common ambition to help people live healthy, independent and fulfilling lives as active members of their communities.

Our aim is to help people live well, stay connected to their families, friends and communities, and get specialist support when they need it. We want people to have the best possible mental health, wellbeing and quality of life at every stage of their lives. To meet the needs of people across Tayside and support national priorities, we will focus on five key areas over the next five years.

1. Improve Wellbeing and Prevent Problems Early

We will:

- Promote mental health and wellbeing for everyone.
- Provide support as early as possible to prevent problems from getting worse.
- Reduce inequalities and make sure services are fair and accessible.
- Focus additional support on people and communities with the greatest needs.
- Tackle stigma and discrimination linked to mental health and learning disabilities.
- Recognise the importance of physical health, mental health and wellbeing working together.

2. Help People Get the Right Support First Time

We will:

- Make it easier for people to access support.
- Ensure there is no wrong door when seeking help.
- Improve access to early support and community services.
- Reduce waiting times where possible.
- Provide clear and easy-to-follow care pathways.
- Work together across organisations to provide joined-up care.

3. Deliver More Care in Communities

We will:

- Provide more mental health and wellbeing support closer to home.
- Strengthen support through primary care, community organisations and peer support.
- Develop community services for people with more complex needs.
- Reduce avoidable hospital admissions and support people to leave hospital as soon as they are ready.
- Recognise unpaid carers as partners in care and commit to supporting their wellbeing.
- Deliver high-quality, sustainable services that meet local needs.

4. Provide Specialist and Hospital Care When Needed

We will:

- Ensure hospital care is available for people who need specialist treatment.
- Provide safe, therapeutic and high-quality inpatient care.
- Reduce the time people spend in hospital where appropriate.
- Reduce the need for people to receive treatment away from their local area.
- Develop Centres of Excellence for people with the most complex needs.
- Use information about local needs to plan and improve services.

5. Support and Develop Our Workforce

We will:

- Make sure staff feel valued, supported and able to do their jobs well.
- Increase opportunities for peer support and lived experience roles.
- Promote compassionate and trauma-informed practice across all services.
- Improve access to effective, evidence-based treatments and interventions.
- Support learning, innovation and continuous improvement.
- Help staff work together to provide seamless, joined-up care for the people we serve.

Our Values & Principles

The values and principles in this strategy describe the way we will work together to improve services, reduce inequalities and deliver better outcomes for the people of Tayside.

Human Rights and Inclusion: We will treat everyone with dignity, respect, compassion and fairness.

Reducing Inequalities: We will work together to remove barriers that make it harder for people to get support. Services will be planned and delivered based on the needs of local people.

Trauma-Informed Care: We understand that trauma can have a lasting impact on people's lives. We will provide care that is compassionate, respectful and sensitive to people's experiences.

Working Together: People who use services, families, carers and staff will help shape, improve and develop our services. Their experience and expertise will guide the way we work.

How We Deliver Care

Care Based on Need: Services will work together to provide joined-up support. Care will be tailored to each person's needs and focused on the outcomes that matter most to them.

Prevention and Early Support: People will be able to access support as early as possible. Early help can improve wellbeing, prevent problems from getting worse and lead to better outcomes.

No Wrong Door: People can ask for help through any service and will be supported to find the care they need. Nobody should be passed from service to service without support.

Care Closer to Home: Where possible, people will receive support in their own communities. If hospital care is needed, it will be for the shortest time possible, with support to return home as soon as it is safe to do so.

Working in Partnership: Services will work closely together across organisations and professions to provide the best possible care and support.

Seeing the Whole Person: We will focus on the whole person, not just their diagnosis. Care will take account of a person's needs, strengths, goals and circumstances.

Evidence-Based Care: Care and support will be based on the best available evidence, professional knowledge and what matters most to the individual.

What Will Help Us Succeed

Making Best Use of Resources: We will use our resources in the most effective way possible. We will focus on approaches that work well, improve outcomes, avoid unnecessary duplication and help services remain sustainable.

Centres of Excellence: People with the most complex needs will have access to specialist hospital services delivered by skilled and experienced professionals.

A Skilled and Sustainable Workforce: People will receive care from staff who are compassionate, skilled and well supported. We will encourage learning, innovation and continuous improvement to provide high-quality care.

Digital Support: We will use technology to improve access to services, support better communication between teams, and provide more personalised and responsive care.

Outcomes

Measuring Success: We will measure the difference our services make to people's lives. We will use clear information and evidence to understand whether we are improving health, wellbeing and the outcomes that matter most to individuals and communities.

What will be different in Tayside by 2031

People will:

- Find it easier and quicker to get help.
- Receive more support closer to home.
- Experience joined-up care as they move between services and different stages of life.
- Be treated with dignity, compassion and respect.
- Have a stronger voice in decisions about their care and support.
- Live in their own homes and communities whenever possible.
- Receive fair and consistent care, based on their individual needs.
- Have access to advocacy, peer support and community networks.
- Experience fewer crises and better long-term outcomes.
- Help shape and improve services through feedback and involvement.
- Receive care that is focused on their needs, goals and aspirations.

Staff will:

- Work in supportive, joined-up teams.
- Have the skills, resources and time needed to provide high-quality care.
- Receive support for their wellbeing, learning and professional development.
- Provide compassionate, person-centred and trauma-informed care.
- Treat people with kindness, dignity and respect, and involve them in decisions about their care.
- Have access to training, supervision and support to deliver safe and effective care.
- Work closely with colleagues across organisations and sectors to provide joined-up support.
- Communicate openly and effectively with people, families and carers.
- Deliver care that is inclusive and responsive to different needs and backgrounds.
- Promote physical health and wellbeing alongside mental health care.
- Benefit from strong leadership, effective workforce planning and a culture of continuous improvement.

Areas for Transformation (2026-2031)

To achieve our vision, we will focus on improving services in ten key areas. These changes will be based on the needs of local people and will help ensure services are joined up, easy to access and focused on what matters most to individuals. Every service will work together to provide the right support at the right time, using approaches that are trauma-informed, neuroaffirming and person-centred.

We will:

1. Enhance our **walk-in mental health and wellbeing hubs** in each locality, where people can access advice, support and specialist help without unnecessary delays.
2. Improve **crisis support**, including safe spaces and timely help for people experiencing distress or a mental health crisis.

3. Create **joined-up support for neurodevelopmental conditions** across all age groups, from childhood through to adulthood.
4. Improve **community support for people with learning disabilities**, helping people live as independently as possible within their own communities.
5. Strengthen pathways and **services for older adults**, including support for people living with dementia and their families.
6. Develop a long-term plan for our buildings and facilities, including **Centres of Excellence** for people with the most complex needs.
7. **Strengthen partnerships with community and voluntary organisations** to provide more joined-up support and make better use of local resources.
8. Increase opportunities for **peer support** and involve **experts by experience** in planning, designing and improving services.
9. **Expand the range of professionals and therapies available**, improving access to evidence-based treatments and support, including psychological therapies and allied health professionals.
10. Make better use of **digital technology** to improve access, communication and the delivery of care across Tayside.



What This Means for People

By improving these areas, people will find it easier to get help, receive more support closer to home, experience better joined-up care, and have access to the services they need throughout their lives.

How this fits with national priorities

This strategy sets out a joint vision for Mental Health and Learning Disability Services across Tayside. It aims to make sure people receive high-quality care that is fair, consistent and based on local needs. It also supports national health and care priorities.

This strategy reflects the Scottish Government's **Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2023)**, which aims to improve mental health and wellbeing for everyone. We use the same definitions of mental health, mental wellbeing and mental illness:

- Mental health is an important part of our overall health. Good mental health helps us cope with life, reach our potential and feel safe and secure.
- Mental wellbeing is how we feel about our ability to manage the everyday challenges of life and maintain positive relationships, work and activities.
- Mental illness describes conditions that affect a person's thoughts, feelings or behaviour and can have a significant impact on daily life. Early support and treatment can help reduce this impact.

This strategy also builds on the vision of Tayside's **Living Life Well Strategy (2021-2025)**. That strategy aimed to create services that help people:

- Live the life they choose.
- Get help as early as possible.
- Access support closer to home.
- Receive compassionate, person-centred care.
- Benefit from joined-up services that recognise the importance of housing, employment, education, relationships and community connections.

Our approach is also aligned with the Scottish Government's **Health and Social Care Service Renewal Framework (2025-2035)**, which sets the direction for improving health and social care services across Scotland. The framework promotes:

- Preventing illness and providing support earlier.
- Putting people at the centre of decisions about their care.
- Delivering more care in local communities.
- Planning services around local needs.
- Using digital technology to improve access, quality and efficiency.

By following these national priorities, we will create services that are sustainable, effective and focused on helping people live healthier, more independent lives.



The strategy also embraces the **four strategic shifts embedded in national reform**:



This Strategy aligns with the **2026-2031 Programme for Government** supports the direction we are taking for Mental Health and Learning Disability Services across Tayside. It focuses on helping people stay well, providing more care and support in local communities, making sure services are fair and accessible, improving the way services work together, using digital technology effectively, and making systems simpler to use. This national approach supports the changes we are making to improve services and outcomes for people across Tayside.

The Tayside Mental Health and Learning Disability Strategy supports the Scottish Government's refreshed **Mental Health Delivery Plan (2026-2031)**, which sets out the priorities for improving mental health and wellbeing over the next five years. The plan focuses on a smaller number of key changes to improve services, including prevention, community support, crisis care, children's services, neurodevelopmental support, and support for people involved in the justice system. It also highlights the importance of providing more care in the community, supporting and developing the workforce, and using evidence to design and improve services.

The strategy also supports Scotland's national suicide prevention strategy, **Creating Hope Together (2022-2032)**. This strategy aims to reduce suicide and lessen its impact on individuals, families and communities. It recognises that preventing suicide is everyone's responsibility and requires services, communities and organisations to work together. The focus is on tackling the factors that can increase the risk of suicide, reducing inequalities, promoting wellbeing, and ensuring people receive timely, compassionate support when they need it. Through prevention,

early support and continuous learning, we can help create safer and more connected communities where people can find hope and support.

Other national policies and strategies that have informed this work are listed in Annex A. We will use the principles and guidance from these documents to help shape and improve services across different areas of care.

Population Health Approach

Scotland's Population Health Framework sets out a long-term approach to improving health and wellbeing and reducing inequalities. It recognises that health is influenced by many factors, including income, education, housing, employment, relationships and the environment in which people live. Improving health therefore requires communities, public services, voluntary organisations, businesses and government to work together.

The framework is based on four key principles:

- **Prevention first:** helping people stay well and preventing problems before they develop.
- **Reducing inequalities:** focusing support on people and communities with the greatest needs.
- **Working together:** recognising that improving health is everyone's responsibility.
- **Improving the conditions for good health:** supporting people to have good housing, education, work opportunities and strong communities.

These principles strongly support the vision for Mental Health and Learning Disability Services in Tayside. We will focus on prevention and early intervention, tackle poverty, exclusion and discrimination, provide more support in local communities, reduce inequalities, and help people live healthy and fulfilling lives.

How this fits with local strategy in Tayside

This strategy supports Tayside's aim to provide more care in communities and less in hospital settings. This is called 'Shifting the Balance of Care'. It focuses on helping people get support earlier, strengthening local partnerships, and improving outcomes for people of all ages. Mental Health and Learning Disability Services are not separate from wider health and social care reform. They are a key part of improving services across Tayside.

We can only achieve the changes set out in this strategy if we work together. NHS Tayside, the three Health and Social Care Partnerships, local councils, community and voluntary organisations, independent providers, people who use services, families and carers all have an important part to play. By planning and delivering services together, and by focusing on what matters most to local people, we can make the best use of resources available and provide more joined-up support across Tayside. This strategy gives us a shared plan while recognising that each community has different needs.

Where possible, people will be supported in their own homes and communities rather than in hospital. By providing more early support, strengthening community services and helping people stay well for longer, we can improve people's health and wellbeing and make services more sustainable for the future. This approach supports our shared goal of improving health, reducing inequalities and providing more care closer to home across Tayside. This approach aligns with the strategic direction of Health and Social Care Partnerships across Tayside and supports the shared

ambition of improving population health, reducing inequalities and delivering care closer to home in each locality area.

Angus

This strategy supports the priorities set out in Angus Health and Social Care Partnership's Strategic Commissioning Framework 2026-2036, along with its Care Closer to Home and Prevention and Proactive Care Strategies. These plans share a common goal: to improve people's health and wellbeing through joined-up care that focuses on individual needs. They recognise that mental and physical health are equally important and that people benefit most when services work together. Mental Health and Learning Disability Services are central to preventing ill health, reducing inequalities, strengthening communities and providing more care closer to home.

Dundee

This strategy also supports Dundee's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategic Plan 2026-2031, which was developed with people who have lived experience of mental health challenges. The plan's vision is for a city where people can access timely, compassionate and joined-up support without facing stigma or inequality. Its priorities include early intervention, prevention, stronger community connections, improved physical health, workforce development, and better support for families and carers.

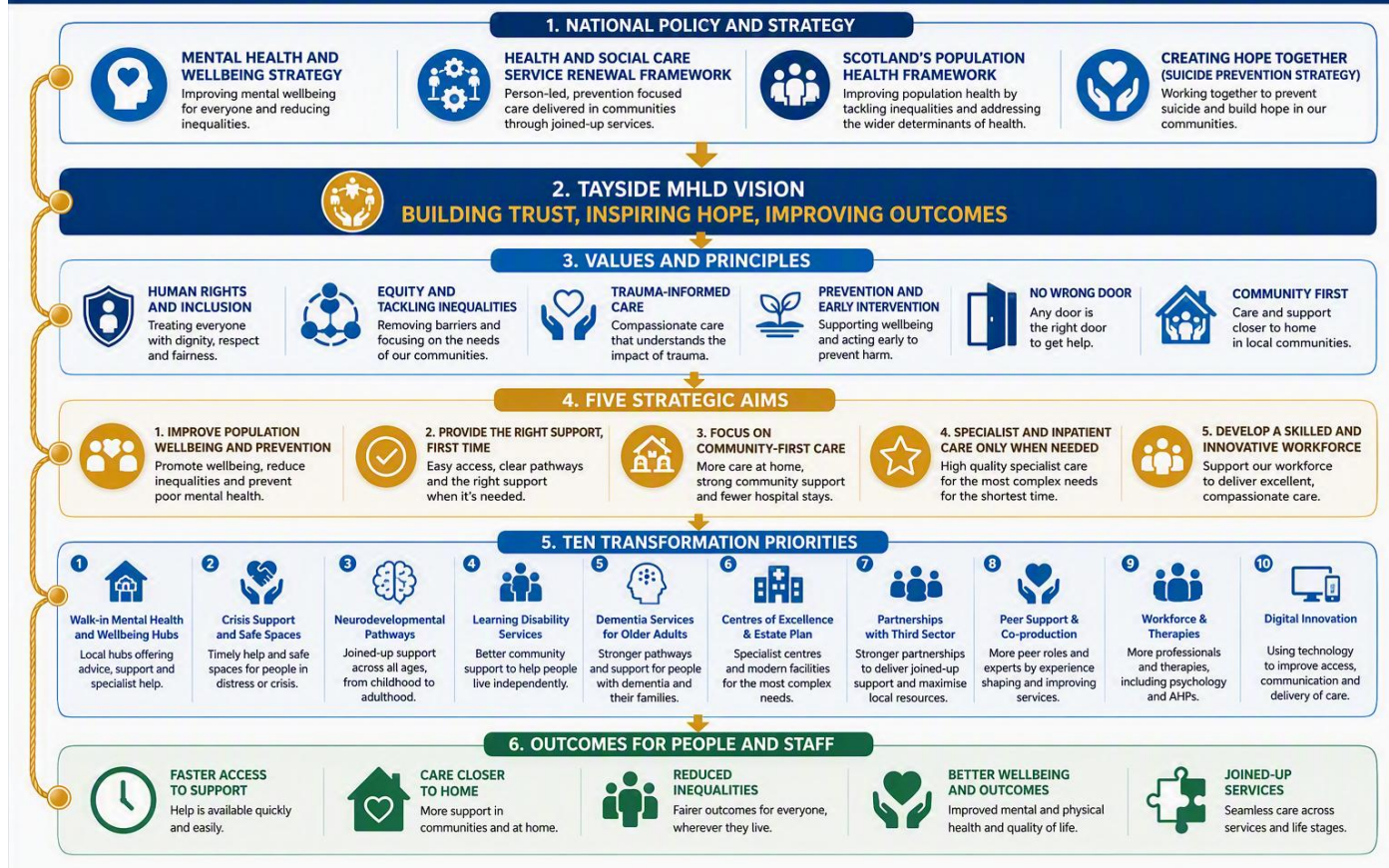
Perth and Kinross

The priorities in Perth and Kinross closely match the aims of this strategy. They focus on prevention, early support, community-based services and partnership working. There is a strong commitment to providing care closer to home, improving links between health and social care services, and working closely with the third sector. Over the next few years, Perth and Kinross will continue to improve access to early help, develop more joined-up services, and expand alternatives to hospital and crisis care within local communities. The experiences of people who use services and the staff who provide them will help shape future improvements. Together, these approaches support our shared ambition across Tayside: to provide compassionate, evidence-based support that helps people live well in their own communities for as long as possible.

Golden Thread: National to Local Delivery

This strategy recognises that sustainable improvement will only be achieved through collective leadership, shared resources and coordinated decision-making across organisational boundaries. By working together, we will improve outcomes, reduce inequalities, deliver best value and build a health and social care system that is sustainable, responsive and centred on the needs of the people and communities of Tayside. The diagram below shows how national policies and priorities are translated into services and support for people across Tayside.

GOLDEN THREAD: NATIONAL TO LOCAL DELIVERY



Together, these golden threads provide the foundation for our vision of **"One Vision, One Strategy, One Service"** for Mental Health and Learning Disability Services across Tayside. To achieve this, our workforce, resources, buildings and digital services will all support the same goals and priorities. We will make the best possible use of the resources available to deliver high-quality care and improve outcomes for local people.

NHS Tayside, the Integration Joint Boards and partner organisations will work together to put this strategy into practice. We will regularly check our progress and make sure our resources are focused on the areas where they can make the biggest difference to people's lives.

Measuring Success

We will regularly review how well the strategy is being delivered and whether it is making a difference to people's lives. We will measure progress using information about service performance, outcomes and feedback from people who use services, carers, families and staff. Regular reports will help us identify what is working well, where improvements are needed and how resources can be used most effectively. This will help us improve services, reduce inequalities and achieve better outcomes for people across Tayside.

We will know this strategy is making a difference when people have better experiences of care, better health and wellbeing, and improved outcomes.

Safe

People will:

- Feel safe when using mental health and learning disability services.

- Be treated with dignity, respect and compassion.
- Experience care that helps improve their quality of life.
- Be supported in ways that reduce stigma and discrimination.
- Experience fewer suicides and fewer serious harms.

Services will:

- Use evidence-based care and treatment.
- Have a skilled, trained and compassionate workforce.

Effective

People will:

- Have better mental health and wellbeing.
- Experience fewer health inequalities.
- Receive support and treatment that meets their needs.
- Benefit from care that is shaped by evidence, professional knowledge and lived experience.
- Experience better physical and mental health outcomes.
- Receive more support in their communities and homes, rather than in hospital whenever possible.

Services will:

- Make better use of evidence, data and learning.
- Have a diverse and well-supported workforce.

Timely

People will:

- Get help when they need it.
- Find it easy to access the right support.
- Experience fewer delays in receiving care and treatment.
- Receive care that responds to their individual needs and circumstances.
- Have a better understanding of mental health and wellbeing and where to get help.

Services will:

- Have services that are accessible and joined up.
- Help people to 'wait well' by offering support if they need to wait for specialist services.

Efficient

People will:

- Receive care in the setting that best meets their needs.
- Be supported to remain at home or in their community whenever possible.
- Only use hospital care when it is needed.

Services will:

- Make the best use of available resources.
- Deliver good value and sustainable services for the future.

Integrated

People will:

- Experience joined-up support across services and organisations.
- Feel confident about where to go for help.
- Only need to tell their story once whenever possible.
- Experience a "no wrong door" approach, where any service can help them access the support they need.
- Benefit from stronger communities that support mental health, wellbeing and social connection.

Services will:

- All work together using the principles of GIRFEC and GIRFE
- Take a needs led approach.

How we will make this happen

This strategy sets out what we want to achieve over the next five years. To make sure these improvements happen, we will develop a Delivery Plan that explains what we will do, who will do it, when it will happen and how we will measure progress. The Delivery Plan will help turn our vision into practical actions and will be updated as needs and priorities change.

The Delivery Plan will:

- Set out the actions needed to deliver each priority in this strategy.
- Identify who is responsible for delivering those actions.
- Include timescales and milestones so progress can be tracked.
- Measure whether services are improving and making a difference to people's lives.
- Help more people get support earlier and closer to home.
- Support the best use of staff, buildings, technology and funding.
- Ensure that people with lived experience help shape and improve services.

Working Together

We cannot deliver this strategy on our own. NHS Tayside, Health and Social Care Partnerships, local authorities, community organisations, care providers, people who use services, families, carers and staff will all work together to improve mental health and learning disability services across Tayside. The Delivery Plan will make sure everyone is clear about their role and how they will contribute.

Monitoring Progress

We will regularly review progress and report on what has been achieved. This will help us understand what is working well, what needs to improve and where additional action may be needed. We will share progress with partners, staff, people who use services and carers so that everyone can see the difference the strategy is making.

How We Will Know We Are Succeeding

We will know the strategy is making a difference when people can get help more easily, receive more support in their communities, experience better joined-up care and achieve better health and wellbeing outcomes. We also want staff to feel supported and valued, and for services across Tayside to work together more effectively. By measuring these outcomes, we can make sure we are delivering real improvements for local people and making the best use of the resources available. We will use a range of measures to understand whether services are improving, including:

- People's experiences of care and support.
- Access and waiting times.
- Health and wellbeing outcomes.
- Rates of crisis presentations, admissions and delayed discharge.
- Suicide prevention measures.
- Community-based care and balance of care indicators.
- Workforce wellbeing, recruitment and retention.
- Feedback from people who use services, families, carers and staff.

These measures will help us understand what is working well, where improvements are needed, and whether we are achieving better outcomes for the people of Tayside. We will set out delivery plans to make sure we do what we say we want to do in this Strategy. We will also measure performance by having Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) so we know what we are doing is making a difference:



Conclusion

The **Tayside Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Strategy 2026-2031** sets out our vision for improving services across Tayside. Our aim is simple: to make sure people get the right support, at the right time, in the right place, from the right person.

We know that more people need support, many people have increasingly complex needs, and some communities experience poorer health outcomes than others. We also know that our staff face growing pressures. To meet these challenges, we need to work differently and provide more support earlier, closer to home, and in ways that are centred on people's needs.

This strategy is built on partnership, inclusion, human rights, compassion and respect. It recognises the importance of working together with people who use services, families, carers, communities and partner organisations to improve care and support.

Over the next five years, we will focus on five key priorities:

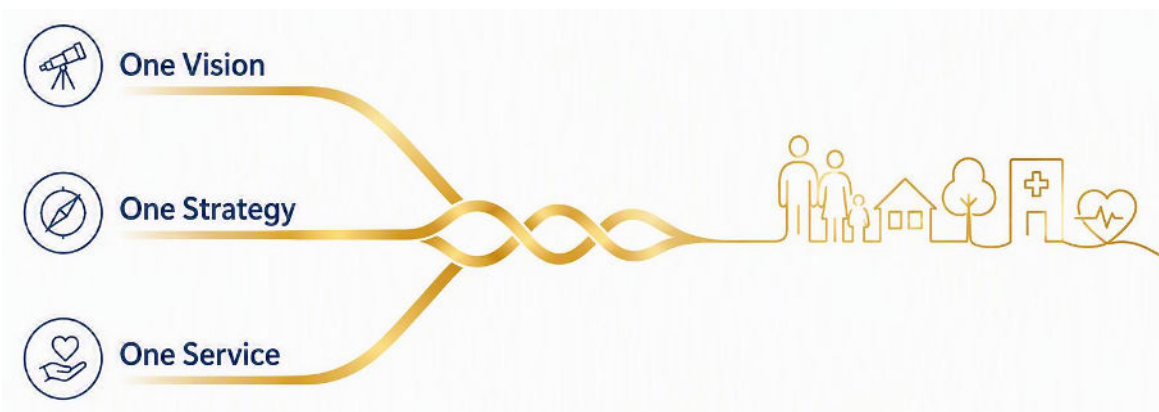
- Improving mental health, wellbeing and prevention.
- Helping people get the right support first time.
- Delivering more care in communities.
- Providing high-quality specialist and hospital care when needed.
- Supporting and developing a skilled, compassionate and sustainable workforce.

We will achieve this by improving community support, developing mental health hubs, strengthening crisis services, improving support for people with neurodevelopmental conditions, learning disabilities and dementia, working more closely with community and voluntary organisations, expanding peer support, and making better use of digital technology.

By 2031, people in Tayside should find it easier to get help, receive more support closer to home, and experience better joined-up care. They will have a greater say in decisions about their lives and experience better health and wellbeing outcomes.

Staff will feel better supported, services will work more closely together, and care will be more consistent across Tayside. Together, we will reduce inequalities, improve outcomes and make the best use of available resources.

This strategy provides a shared vision for the future of Mental Health and Learning Disability Services in Tayside. By working together, we will build trust, inspire hope and improve outcomes for the people and communities we serve.



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Annex A: National Policies and Guidance

This annex summarises the national policies, frameworks and guidance that have helped shape the **Tayside Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Strategy 2026-2031**.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2023)

The Scottish Government's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy recognises that mental health is just as important as physical health.

- **Mental health** is part of our overall health and affects how we think, feel and live our daily lives.
- **Mental wellbeing** is about feeling able to cope with everyday challenges, build positive relationships and live the life we choose.
- **Mental illness** refers to health conditions that affect a person's thinking, feelings or behaviour and can have a significant impact on daily life.

The strategy also recognises that mental health and wellbeing are influenced by many factors, including our physical health, life experiences, relationships, culture, poverty and discrimination.

Scotland's Dementia Strategy: *Everyone's Story* (2023-2033)

This strategy aims to improve the lives of people living with dementia, their families and unpaid carers. It recognises dementia as a condition that affects the whole person and those around them.

Its goal is to help people with dementia live well, exercise their rights, access support when they need it, and continue to be active members of their communities.

The Coming Home Report

The Coming Home Report describes a learning disability as a lifelong condition that affects how a person learns, understands information, communicates and lives independently.

The report highlights that people with learning disabilities and complex needs should be supported to live in their own communities, close to family, friends and support networks, rather than remaining in hospital for long periods.

Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Standards

The MAT Standards were introduced to improve treatment and support for people experiencing problems with drug use.

They promote:

- Quick access to support and treatment.
- Greater choice for individuals.
- Harm reduction approaches.
- Continuity of care.
- Long-term recovery support.
- A human rights-based approach to care.

Neurodevelopmental Conditions Framework

Scotland's approach to neurodevelopmental conditions recognises that conditions such as autism and ADHD affect how people think, learn, communicate and interact with others.

The framework promotes support based on a person's needs rather than diagnosis alone. It recognises that support should come from a range of services, including health, education, social care, employers and communities.

The aim is to help people access the support, adjustments and treatment they need to live the life they choose.

National Trauma Transformation Programme

This programme aims to make services across Scotland more trauma-informed.

It recognises that many people have experienced trauma or adversity and that these experiences can affect health, wellbeing and opportunities throughout life.

The programme promotes compassionate approaches that help people recover, reduce inequalities and improve life chances.

The Promise

The Promise is Scotland's commitment to improving the lives of children, young people and families.

It is based on the belief that children should grow up loved, safe and respected, and that families should receive support as early as possible. The Promise emphasises strong relationships, compassion and involving children and families in decisions that affect them.

Learning Disabilities, Autism and Neurodivergence (LDAN) Bill

The proposed LDAN Bill aims to strengthen the rights, inclusion and support available to people with learning disabilities, autism and other neurodevelopmental differences.

Its goal is to improve access to services, advocacy and coordinated support while helping people live healthy, fulfilling lives within their communities.

CAMHS National Specification (2020)

The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) National Specification sets out standards for mental health services for children and young people.

It aims to ensure children and young people can access timely, evidence-based care close to home, with support provided in partnership with families, carers and other services.

National Specification for Psychological Therapies and Interventions (2023)

This specification sets out how psychological therapies should be delivered across Scotland.

It promotes access to the right psychological support at the right time through care that is person-centred, trauma-informed and based on evidence. Its focus is on improving wellbeing, reducing inequalities and supporting recovery.

Core Mental Health Quality Standards (2023)

These standards describe what good mental health care should look like.

They aim to ensure people can get the right support, in the right place, at the right time, through services that are responsive, consistent and focused on individual needs.

Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Pathway (2026)

This framework focuses on improving mental health support for military veterans.

It recognises that some veterans experience challenges linked to military service, including trauma, injury and life changes. The aim is to make sure veterans can access timely, compassionate and effective support.

National Specification for Eating Disorders (2024)

This specification sets out how eating disorder services should be delivered across Scotland.

Its aim is to ensure people receive safe, timely and consistent care regardless of where they live, with support based on evidence and focused on recovery.

National Neurodevelopmental Specification for Children and Young People

This specification describes how children and young people with neurodevelopmental support needs should be supported.

It promotes early intervention, personalised support and coordinated services that involve children, young people and families in decisions about their care.

Scotland's Alcohol and Drugs Strategic Plan: *Preventing Harm, Promoting Recovery* (2026-2035)

This strategy sets out Scotland's long-term approach to reducing harm caused by alcohol and drugs and supporting recovery.

Its priorities include:

- Prevention and early intervention.
- Reducing harm.
- Improving access to treatment.
- Supporting recovery.
- Working in partnership across services and communities.
- Reducing inequalities.

The strategy closely reflects the aims of the Tayside Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Strategy through its focus on person-centred care, trauma-informed practice, community support and improving outcomes for people and communities.