

NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership (NWSSP) is an independent mutual organisation, owned and directed by NHS Wales. It was set up on 1st April 2011 to provide a range of high quality, customer-focused professional, technical and administrative services on behalf of all Health Boards and Trusts in NHS Wales.

Our aim is to support NHS Wales by creating a dedicated shared services organisation with a distinct identity, which:

- Shares common operating standards in line with best practice
- Has sufficient scale to optimise economies of scale and purchasing power and improving quality
- Has an excellent customer care ethos and focus on service quality

Thereby acting in support of the statutory Health Boards and NHS Trusts in Wales, so that they may in turn, focus on more effective local delivery of front-line services. In addition, the organisation will provide professional advice and support to Welsh Government.

Why did you sign the Employer Pledge?

In 2018, NWSSP created a Mental Health Well-being Advisor role to begin working to establish a strong mental health support system for our employees. We started by refreshing our intranet support resources and quickly moved on to training some staff members as mental health first aiders.

Over time, our Mental Health Well-being Advisor created a variety of support options for our team, ensuring that our Employee Assistance Program was just one of the available resources.

We also began collaborating with mental health organisations throughout the UK, recognising that support needs vary and giving staff the freedom to choose the options that best suit them. During the development of this new role, we discovered Time to Change Wales and their incredible efforts to eliminate mental health stigma and discrimination in the workplace. We were impressed by the positive impact of their anti-stigma campaigns and their commitment to raising mental health awareness at work.

Time to Change Wales offered to train our own champions to promote mental health and provided anti-stigma talks through their champions, a free service that allowed many of our teams to gain insight into living and working with mental health conditions.

As an organisation, we believed that by signing the Time to Change Wales pledge, creating an early action plan that focused on combating stigma and increasing awareness would be a valuable opportunity for NWSSP. Therefore, in October 2020 our Managing Director proudly signed the pledge as we made a public declaration to continuously raise awareness and reduce any stigma within our business.

How do you promote mental health awareness?

We take pride in our commitment to promoting mental health awareness at NWSSP. Throughout the years, we have implemented various strategies to enhance mental health awareness throughout the organisation.

We believe that raising awareness about mental health is crucial for diminishing stigma, fostering healthy coping strategies, and improving access to therapy. Additionally, it encourages

open conversations about mental health, helping us gain a deeper understanding of our own feelings. To achieve this, we have established several avenues for raising awareness, which we have outlined below:

- Mental Health First Aiders
- Mental Health Support Group
- Men's Support Group
- Mental Health Awareness Sessions
- Time to Change Wales Employee Champions
- Dedicated mental health staff intranet pages
- Access to a robust Employee Assistance Programme
- Stress Management Training
- Resilience Awareness Training
- Support options via various mental health charities e.g. Maximus, ENEI and MIND Cymru
- Mental Health Webinars
- Mental Health calendar events across the organisation
- Mental Health podcasts intranet pages
- Mental Health Toolkit for self-assessment and self-referral

What long-term actions will you take to enable a positive mental wellbeing environment in your workplace?

We are committed to maintaining the excellent mental health support we've developed for our staff over the years.

Our goal is to consistently introduce new opportunities for colleagues, provide training and awareness sessions, and work to eliminate stigma and discrimination. With the support of Time to Change Wales, our efforts to reduce stigma will carry on in the future at NWSSP.

We will always work to educate and address issues as needed. We understand that raising awareness about mental health is a continuous effort, as circumstances frequently change. Our dedication to ensuring that our staff feels supported will remain strong moving forward.

Our partnership with Time to Change Wales has undoubtedly driven our commitment to delivering exceptional service over the years.

NWSSP colleagues can feel confident that their mental health will always be prioritised, safeguarded, and cared for in every possible manner.