



the british
psychological society
welsh branch / cangen cymru

A Psychological Manifesto for the Senedd Election 2021

About the BPS

The British Psychological Society (BPS) is a registered charity which acts as the representative body for psychology and psychologists in the UK and is responsible for the promotion of excellence and ethical practice in the science, education, and application of the discipline. It is the UK's biggest community of psychologists.

As a society we support and enhance the development and application of psychology for the greater public good, setting high standards for research, education, and knowledge, and disseminating our knowledge to increase public awareness.

We strive to:

Be the learned society and professional body for the discipline.

Make psychology accessible to all.

Promote and advance the discipline.

Be the authoritative and public voice of psychology.

Determine and ensure the highest standards in all we do.

We are calling on political parties to consider how psychological evidence and expertise can improve policy making and to commit to including psychologically informed policies in their manifestos. Any government serious about improving the lives of the public and understanding why intractable social problems persist must ensure that their policies and interventions are based on an in-depth understanding of human behaviour.

Here we outline our priorities for the next Welsh Government developed in collaboration with BPS members.

1. Health and social care

Developing psychological professions as an integral part of the future workforce

Psychologists and other psychological professionals play a central role in meeting the needs of many of the most vulnerable individuals and communities in our society. They are integral to the delivery of *NHS Wales' Long Term Strategy*.

There are significant barriers to entering and progressing in the profession, with a lack of training places, unclear career paths and difficulty accessing continuing professional development, despite psychology being one of the most popular undergraduate courses.

We call on the next Welsh Government to commit to developing psychological professions as an integral part of the future workforce, establishing strong leadership for psychological professions and protecting the public through smarter regulation. This will ultimately deliver interventions that can both reduce demands on the NHS and other relevant sectors and improve people's lives.

2. Education and young people

Support for under 5s

Many children and young people will be facing a major disruption in their routine, education and social lives as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic – and will need support and encouragement more than ever. The BPS believes that interruptions to children and young people's basic needs will have a big impact on their emotions and behaviour.

Whilst we welcome the Welsh Government's recent funding of £3.75m towards mental health support in schools, we believe that further action is needed to address the increase in demand for support following the Covid-19 pandemic.

We call on the next Welsh Government to include a commitment to develop a holistic health and wellbeing strategy for children from conception to age five, so that every child has the best start in life.

Support for students

The mental health of both students and staff in higher (HE) and further (FE) education is a serious concern for the BPS.

To respond to the increasing mental health crisis in our universities and colleges, **we call on the next Welsh Government to ensure that all higher and further education institutions seek to make mental health and wellbeing a strategic priority, implementing a whole institution approach.** The aim of this approach would be not only to support students and staff struggling with their mental health but also seek to create a physical, cultural and learning environment that promotes wellbeing.

Young people's mental health strategy

The Welsh Government's *Together for Mental Health Delivery Plan 2019–2022* outlines its priority to improve access to support for the emotional and mental well-being of children and young people in Wales, but we believe that a specific dedicated strategy is needed for young people.

We support the Welsh Youth Parliament's call to improve access to services, and **we call on the next Welsh Government to deliver a strategy for young people's mental health, taking a 'young people's wellbeing in all policies' approach to future policy-making and addressing inequalities that can contribute towards worse mental health.**

3. Working lives

Changes in working practice

A significant change in working practices can be expected in future as a result of Covid-19. The most significant and visible trend is likely to be the migration of work from office to home. While this opens opportunities for organisations and employees, its success is likely to be dependent on how the changes in practice impact on the psychological contract. The [latest survey](#) from Public Health Wales has found that 64% of people believe that they have a better work life balance as a result of the Covid-19 restrictions. The same proportion think less travel resulting in less pollution may also be long-term benefit.

The BPS has published [guidance](#) and considerations for employers and employees which will allow them to create healthy, sustainable homeworking conditions using the SHARE approach (Seek, Help, Assess, Reach, Evaluate).

The BPS calls on the next Welsh Government to work with employers to ensure psychologically healthy workplaces – both at home and in offices - that support workers to thrive mentally and physically.

4. From poverty to flourishing – Bringing psychology into action on poverty

Poverty is a systemic crisis in Wales. Across the country, 50,000 working-age adults are in poverty despite living in [households where all adults are working](#). Some 29% of children of Welsh children are also being [brought up in poverty](#), with two thirds of children living in households where at least one adult is in a paid job. These statistics present the stark reality of poverty in Wales, and the rest UK over the last year; however, the coronavirus crisis will undoubtedly exacerbate this situation. The full effects will not be known for some time, but they are likely to be lasting. Despite government action to try to protect workers and businesses, inevitably there have been thousands of job losses and many more people are struggling to make ends meet.

We call on the next Welsh Government to take further action and ensure that policy interventions are quickly developed, to address the challenge of poverty in the longer term.



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