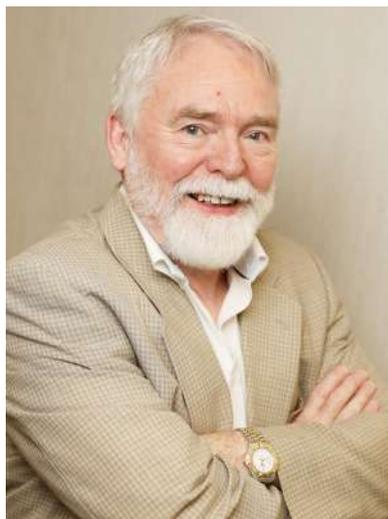


**AWARE**  
**STRATEGIC PLAN**  
**2019-2024**



## Welcome by Chair

**Over the past few months AWARE has been engaged in a consultation process designed to help shape our strategic vision for the next five years. From the outset it was the Board's clear intention that the process should be as inclusive as possible and, in that regard, I believe the format of workshops and the online survey enabled us to achieve that goal.**



Four workshops, facilitated by our Trustees, focused on our key strategic aims

- Providing Support Services
- Delivering Education and Training
- Effective Fundraising and Communication to Support Service Delivery
- Organisational Research and Development

Upwards of fifty people including service users, volunteers, sessional workers and staff participated in the workshops providing a range of invaluable suggestions based on their own personal insights and experiences. Coupled with the numerous responses to our online survey from a range of stakeholders and members of the public, I am confident we now have a unique resource of observations and opinions that will help shape AWARE's vision for the next five years.

On behalf of the Board I would like to sincerely thank all those who took the time to engage in the consultation to date. The strategic plan is a work in progress and this report is, understandably, at a high level. Over the next few months and beyond, detail will be developed on our core objectives and, as we move forward, I hope your involvement continues.

**Bernard Mc Ananey**  
Chairperson



## Introduction

**AWARE is the Depression Charity for Northern Ireland. We are a regional voluntary organisation established in Northern Ireland in 1996. We are the only charity in Northern Ireland dedicated exclusively to raising awareness of depression as a serious mental health condition and to enabling people with depression, anxiety or bipolar disorder to access support to help them with their condition.**

AWARE was founded by people with personal experience of depression and bipolar disorder. People who were concerned about the negative impact this has on peoples lives and the lack of understanding and support available in the community at that time. They were driven by a passion to ensure that others should not suffer as they did. This user led ethos remains a key driver of AWARE's work and the majority of our volunteers and staff bring to the organisation the unique insight of personal experience.

We provide the following services to people with depression, anxiety or bipolar disorder:

- Support groups for people with depression, anxiety and bipolar disorder, their families and carers
- Education and training programmes including Living Life to the Full, Mood Matters, Mindfulness and Mental Health First Aid
- Information outreach, public talks, booklets and factsheets
- An interactive website

As an organisation we proactively research new evidence based services nationally and internationally and keep informed of best practice in the area of depression, anxiety and bipolar disorder. Our Board is made up of those with specialisms in this field and this is important for the organisation to ensure we provide services and programmes with a strong evidence base. It is important also, given that all our programmes go through our Clinical Governance Group to ensure that the programmes we develop are of the highest clinical standard having been scrutinised and informed by a Psychiatrist, GP and CBT Therapist.

# Our Vision, Mission and Values



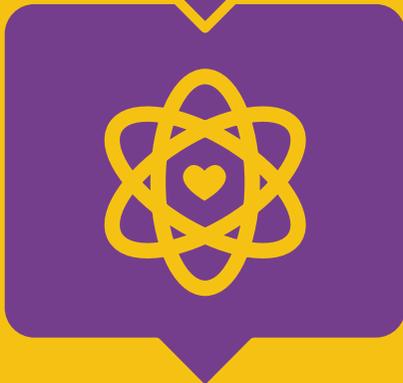
## Our Vision

- A future where everyone can talk about their mental health openly, access services appropriate to their needs and develop the skills and knowledge to maintain positive mental health



## Our Mission

- To promote emotional health and wellbeing
- To help people build resilience and maintain positive mental health
- To ensure people with depression, anxiety and bipolar disorder are aware of and can access appropriate support
- To increase public understanding of depression and reduce the stigma surrounding the illness



## Our Values

- Dignity, respect and empathy - We will treat each other and our service users with dignity, respect and empathy.
- Integrity, professionalism and transparency - We are committed to the highest standards of professionalism, honesty and openness in all aspects of our work.
- Innovation and Excellence - We are committed to providing high quality services and to being innovative for the benefit of people using our services.



## Our Ethos

### User-Led

Those who best understand the challenges faced by people affected by depression, anxiety or bipolar disorder are those who have been affected by it themselves. We therefore promote a strong user-led, self-help approach and the culture of the organisation is therefore based on the active involvement of its service users, as well as staff and volunteers.

### Volunteering

We place a high value on the importance of our Volunteers who give up their time without financial gain to support others. We actively promote and reward volunteering across the work of the organisation.

### Clinical Standards

The clinical excellence of our programmes is paramount to our service delivery. Clinical governance of all our programmes and external messages are rigorous and ongoing and this is embedded within the organisational culture.

### Partnership working

We are committed to working with a wide range of groups including those based in local communities, those representing a particular community of interest and other sectoral organisations who work with people who may be experiencing mental health problems.

### Our Behaviours

- We will respect everyone we come into contact with
- We will listen non-judgementally
- We will be positive, polite and professional in our dealings with people
- We will do what we say we will do
- We will foster a culture that is caring and compassionate

# OUR KEY STRATEGIC AIMS

## Strategic Aim 1

### Providing Support Services

#### Objectives

1. Deliver services to support & signpost people with depression, anxiety & bipolar disorder or who are at risk from these illnesses, their families, carers and friends
2. Increase availability and accessibility of our services across Northern Ireland
3. Develop partnerships with those in Primary Care, Secondary Care, statutory services and the wider community and voluntary sector for the benefit of our service users
4. Develop links and partnerships with local community groups across Northern Ireland

## Strategic Aim 2

### Delivering Education & Training

#### Objectives

5. Improve the mental health and wellbeing of communities
6. Train those who may come into contact with someone with mental ill health to provide initial support & signposting
7. Support positive mental health within communities

## Strategic Aim 3

### Effective Fundraising & Communications to Support Service Delivery

#### Objectives

8. Increase the public profile of AWARE in order to promote our key messages about depression, anxiety and bipolar disorder
9. Raise sufficient income every year to support our operational plans
10. Develop an enhanced & improved fundraising toolkit to include communications specific to Fundraising

## Strategic Aim 4

### Organisational Research & Development

#### Objectives

11. Ensure continuous, strong, corporate and clinical excellence
12. Develop and evolve services and programmes that are evidence based
13. Continuously improve our effectiveness and efficiency
14. Support and develop our people
15. Measure our impact