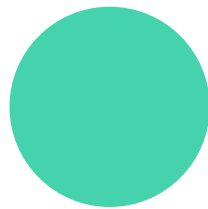




23/24

Annual report

canopi.nhs.wales



Canopi is funded by Welsh Government
and administered by Cardiff University

Contents

Foreword	4
Co-Directors' summary	5
Our mission and aims	6
Meet the team	7
How to access our service	9
Our services	10
Achievements	11
New connections	12
Welcoming a brand new team of Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners	13
Who did we help?	15
Joanne: a story from social care	16
Gemma: a story from the NHS	17
Service feedback	18



Foreword

As the Chief Executive for the NHS in Wales, I strongly believe that our health and care workforce is our strongest asset, and that their health and wellbeing is of the utmost importance.

It is clear that the Canopi service and the support options it provides is helping enormously to address the pressures on our health and social care sectors, supporting staff, reducing staff absences, and in the longer term improving staff retention.

The statistics within this report show a 53% increase in the number of self-referrals during 2023-24 compared to the previous year. These figures speak for themselves and demonstrate the need for support for our hard-working staff in the health and social care sector.

Canopi continues to provide the best care possible in the face of incredible demand for its services. We continue to work in extremely challenging times, and we need to take good care of ourselves and each other. It remains vital therefore to provide support for mental health at work for those with existing issues, for those at risk, and for the workforce as a whole.

I am grateful to the Canopi service for its incredible resilience as it grows, responds and diversifies, and for its continued passion in delivering a high quality, independent, equitable and timely service. I know that client feedback has remained incredibly positive and that Canopi will utilise this information to drive continuous professional development. I am sure that trust and confidence in the service will continue to grow.

I wish you all continued success.



Judith Paget CBE

Director General of Health and Social Services and
Chief Executive NHS Wales

Co-Directors' summary

In its second year, Canopi has continued to see an increasing number of people who have self-referred from across the NHS and social care workforce in Wales. The service continues to receive exceptional feedback and deliver significant outcomes for clients.

This encouraging trend highlights the trust and value placed in the Canopi service, and the willingness of these individuals to disclose their mental health concerns in a free-to-access and confidential space.

However, this trend also highlights the significant level of need and difficulty that staff working in social care and the NHS are facing.

Anxiety-related symptoms remain the most common presentation, often precipitated by work-place related triggers. The successful introduction of our therapist-guided CBT model shows that a combination of self-help and therapist-guided support can be an empowering and effective way to improve these symptoms. Over the coming year, we are really looking forward to further innovations, including the inclusion of Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners within our offer.

Whilst Canopi continues to provide high-quality mental health support and a variety of digital resources to promote mental health and wellbeing on our website, this report also strongly supports the need for additional preventative changes in the workplace.

In the area of research, we have supported and continue to recruit for two research projects on post-traumatic stress and depression. We are also undertaking our own detailed analysis to better understand the patterns and trends of individuals presenting to the service, and the impact of the service as a whole.

In summary, it has been our privilege to support NHS and social care staff in this way, and we hope you enjoy reading this report.



Dr Jake Hard and Dr Thomas Kitchen
Canopi Co-Directors

What are we trying to do?

Our mission

Canopi offers free mental health and wellbeing support to NHS and social care staff in Wales.

The current Canopi service grew from the team's past experiences of offering mental health support to doctors in Wales. The COVID-19 pandemic saw a significant increase in the number of self-referrals from those not just on the front line but throughout NHS Wales.

We also received a number of enquiries from the social care sector during this time. After a successful re-tender in April 2022, we expanded our service.

Funded by Welsh Government and administered by Cardiff University, we are pleased to say that our service now covers a wide range of professionals working across both NHS and social care sectors in Wales.

Aims

- Offer timely, confidential and free mental health support to those who are seeking a confidential service
- Help break down the stigma around the disclosure of mental health challenges that people face in the workplace
- Extend the services and therapies available through Canopi to make sure we have a service that offers clients a diverse choice of appropriate therapies and services
- Build on and increase our collaborations with organisations such as Health Education and Improvement Wales, the National Centre for Mental Health, the British Medical Association, Social Care Wales, the Association of Social Services, NHS England and the Welsh Ambulance Service.

Who's who



Dr Jake Hard
Co-Director



Dr Thomas Kitchen
Co-Director



Dr Gill Toms
Deputy Director



Naomi Marfell
Centre Manager

Support team

17 Doctor Advisors

2 Supervisor Doctor Advisors

16 Wellbeing Allies

1 Specialist Dr Advisors

50 Therapists

Strategic advisory group

Dr Majd Al Shamaa, Health Professionals
Dr Sheila Brennan, Psychological Therapies
Jeremy Brown, Care Home Managing Director
Peter Hunt, MyMEDIC Team Leader

Dr Julia Lewis, Addictions and Psychiatry
Dr Adrian Neal, Employee Wellbeing
Stacey Taylor, Community Resource Team

Administration

Zuleika Gregory	Betsi Doyle
Lizzie Hobbs	Caitlin Acreman
Catherine Aymar	Julia Pearce
Dylan Johns	Becs Parker
Aimee Grimstead	Catrin Hopkins

Public advisory group

Natalie Harper, Interim Chair
Jade Smitherman
Geraint Jones
Sarah Sutton
Becca Louch
Yvonne Dignam

Canopi team

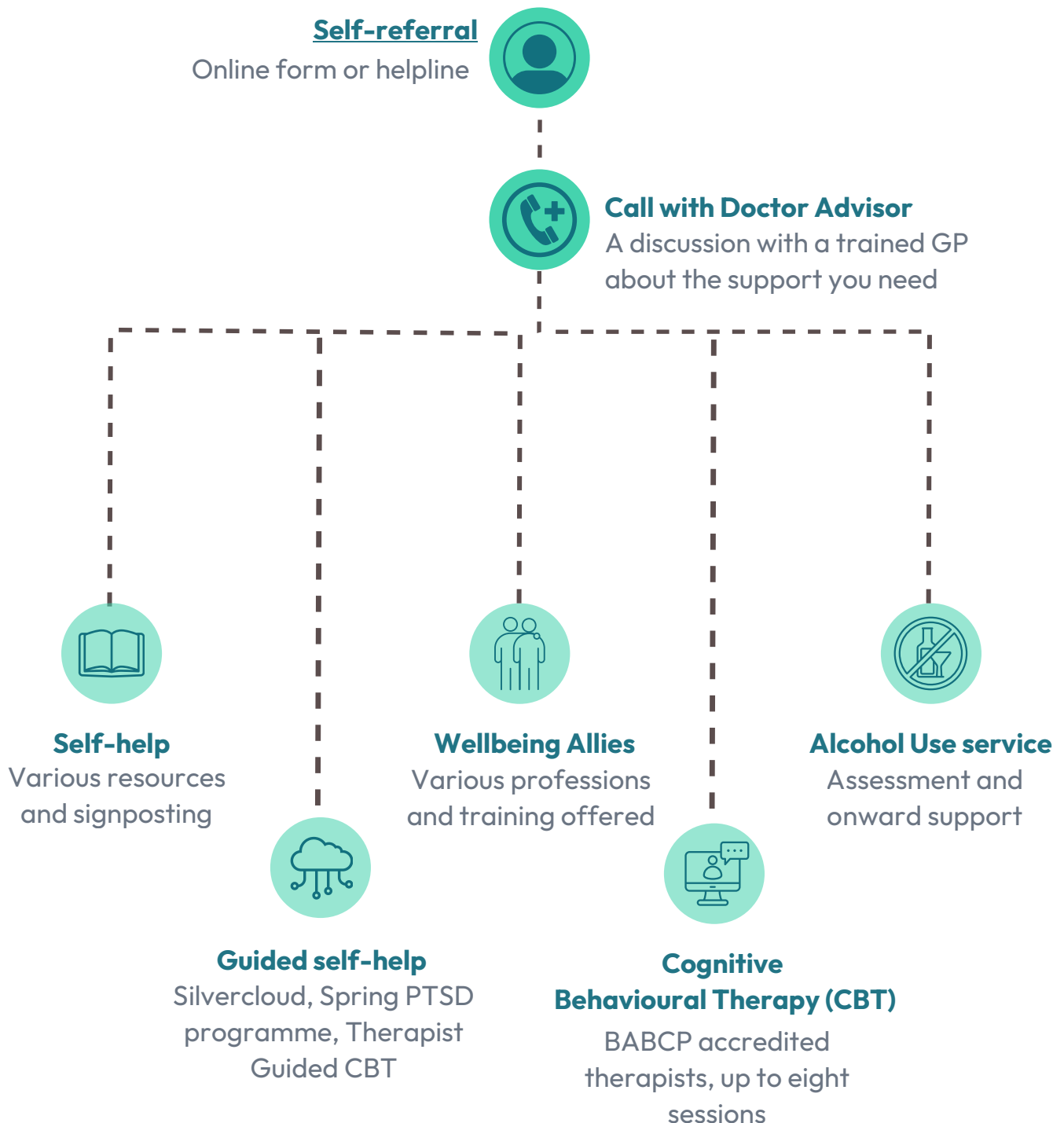
The Canopi collective is a group of individuals who are all committed to improving the mental health of all NHS and social care staff in Wales.



How to access our service

People can refer themselves for support at any time using our online form. After submitting the form, the individual is invited to book an assessment with a Doctor Advisor (DA). During the assessment, the DA will discuss support options and decide on a tailored approach together with the client.

Below is a structure of support that is available through Canopi:



Our services



Self-help

In collaboration with Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) and the NHS England Practitioner Health service, we are able to sign-post to numerous applications, self-help guides, virtual groups and other services.



Guided self-help

Following initial consultations with either a SilverCloud or Canopi therapist, individuals are directed to specific self-help materials. As appropriate, a follow-up consultation reviews the need for additional support.

We have recently introduced Therapist-Guided CBT, offering evidence-based materials for clients to access through Canopi with support from a select group of therapists. In conjunction with Traumatic Stress Wales, we also offer access to a PTSD guided self-help service for mild-moderate PTSD.



Wellbeing Allies

This gives users access to volunteer Wellbeing Allies. Doctors are directed to the services run by the British Medical Association (BMA). Other health and social care staff are directed to a Canopi service.



Virtual face-to-face consultations

Individuals can receive Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) from a British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies (BABCP) accredited therapist.



Alcohol service

Individuals are supported through a specialist alcohol use assessment and accessing onward interventions where appropriate.

We recognise that an individual's mental health can be affected by many aspects of their personal and professional lives.

We signpost to an organisation called [Able-Futures](#) which offers support to those experiencing challenges with relationships, finance, housing, working environments as well as other difficulties.

Achievements

April 2023 to
March 2024

This infographic shows some key figures
from our activity over the last year.



3,702

people accessed
our service

70



Advisors and
therapists supported
our clients

78k



visits to our
website



1,800

people received Cognitive
Behavioural Therapy



135

people signposted to
Wellbeing Ally support



47k

views on our blog!



7

members in our
Strategic Advisory Group

53



people were signposted for
specialist PTSD support



125

people were signposted to
Therapist-Guided CBT

New connections

Collaboration with our partner and stakeholder organisations is essential to ensure the Canopi service is reaching everyone within NHS Wales and the social care sector.

Canopi has continued to strengthen existing relationships with the NHS and social care sector, as well as developing new connections.

In March 2024, we reached our two-year milestone of providing support to people working in social care. This created a good opportunity to reconnect with the 22 local authorities across Wales. Canopi provides a service to all the social care sectors but connecting with local authorities is important for us, as social service departments are often at the 'hub' of local social care arrangements. They can therefore raise awareness about Canopi with commissioned services and other local social care providers.

Since reaching out to reconnect, we've had meetings with eleven local authorities and further meetings are planned. We have been invited to present to several social service teams and we have supported local authorities to refresh their information about Canopi on staff intranet sites. We have also distributed more Canopi posters and flyers. To maintain these connections, Canopi will reach out to local authorities with a bi-annual update.

We are always happy to arrange a meeting or attend a conference to talk about what we do.

For more information, please contact canopi@cardiff.ac.uk.



Connect with us

Follow us on social media for more information on our service, updates and recruitment opportunities.



@canopicymru



Canopi mental health support

Expanding our therapist-guided CBT programme: welcome to our new Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners!

To provide more self-help options and increase their use with clients as part of a stratified care pathway, we initiated a pilot programme called therapist-guided CBT in 2022.

Therapist-guided CBT (TG-CBT) is a psychological intervention which involves a combination of specific self-help materials with guided support. Similar 'Step 2' interventions have long been offered as part of the NHS Talking Therapies for Anxiety and Depression programme in England (formerly known as Improving Access to Psychological Therapies).

Canopi draws upon learning from the English Talking Therapies Model and the Welsh Prudent Healthcare approach by offering clients initial assessments, before signposting them directly to the service which best fits their needs. All clients complete PHQ and GAD forms*, followed by a triage assessment with a Doctor Advisor and subsequent signposting to

support options including TG-CBT.

A recent review of Canopi's TG-CBT programme for NHS and social care staff in Wales suggested that this approach effectively improves mental health outcomes for clients presenting with a number of common symptoms including anxiety, depression, panic disorder and phobias (excluding social or vomit phobias).

The positive outcomes of TG-CBT and the recent BABCP accreditation of Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners (PWP), have encouraged us to further develop this aspect of our service through recruitment of a new group of PWPs.

Our practitioners will assess and support Canopi clients with the above symptoms, providing they have:

- a low risk of suicidality
- mild to moderate PHQ/GAD scores
- primary problems not related to substance misuse or a history of significant mental health problems
- no anger management requirements, or significant relationship issues.



We look forward to working with our new PWPs and reflecting on the impact of our expanded programme in the coming year.

* Questionnaires used to screen, diagnose, monitor and measure the severity of anxiety and depression.

Who did we help from the NHS?

This infographic shows the people we helped from the NHS this year.



426

Allied health professional

127

Ambulance staff

342

Clerical and administrative

31

Dental

54

Estates team

284

Health care assistant

21

Health visitor

97

Managerial

284

Medical

90

Midwifery

663

Nursing

95

Other non-clinical staff

78

Scientific

47

Support worker

21

Technical staff

9

Prefer not to say

Who did we help from social care?

This infographic shows all the people we helped from the social care sector this year.

29 

Administrative or professional services

4 

Assessment and support

24 

Family worker

1 

Foster carer

22 

Health/ allied health working in social care

2 

Other

2 

Personal assistant

14 

Residential home management

98 

Social worker

140 

Support/ care worker

2 

Support staff in a social care service



Are you a social care manager?

We want to help more social care staff across Wales.

Spread the word about our service by ordering some promotional posters for your workplace.

Email canopi@cardiff.ac.uk



A story from social care

Joanne is an experienced social worker in Wales. She sought help from Canopi in 2023 after struggling with work stress. In this blog, she explains how cognitive behavioural therapy provided through Canopi helped her to manage stress at work.

I am a social care worker with 30-years' experience of working in health and social care in rural Wales. In my current role within a safeguarding team, I deal with some complex cases which contributed to me having overwhelming feelings of stress in 2023.

At the time, I didn't feel able to speak to my manager about this and I avoided going to see my GP, afraid that they might sign me off work, resulting in increased pressure on my colleagues – not to mention the unwanted attention that it would bring.

I recalled seeing a Canopi poster on the wall at work and reading more about it on the work intranet. Knowing that I could contact them anonymously, without my employer being aware, helped me to take the first step. After referring myself online, I spoke to a lovely Doctor Advisor who gave me some initial advice and then signposted me to a cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) therapist.

The CBT sessions involved completing activities each week and then discussing them with my therapist via Teams. Initially, I was worried that meeting online would not be as effective, but I was wrong.

My therapist was very skilful in getting me

to open up and reflect on my thought processes at work in response to the situations I was dealing with. She helped me to realise that we cannot quickly and easily change some of the thoughts that we have, but we can change the way that we respond to them.

Therapy also helped me to recognise that my work-life balance was out of kilter and that I needed to set boundaries to prevent the system or other people from taking advantage of my generosity. My therapist helped me to understand my colleagues felt this was acceptable because I had been allowing that pattern of behaviour and that it's ok to be assertive and say, "No."

The help that Canopi provided was massive. I struggle to put into words how much it helped me to continue working in my job as a social worker. Since my sessions with Canopi have come to an end, I am able to better manage stress and reuse the activities recommended by my therapist to support help me do this. I would certainly recommend Canopi to anyone working in social care.

"I can only thank Canopi profusely for their help and hope that this story is helpful to anyone feeling stuck."

A story from the NHS

Gemma is a consultant in the NHS. Between the challenges of work and training, she often felt like an imposter and experienced suicidal thoughts. Read about how seeking support from Canopi helped her become a happier and healthier version of herself.



As a senior registrar, I started to suffer with imposter syndrome and work-related anxiety. Due to the ongoing stigma that I already felt being a less-than-full-time trainee, I didn't want to add mental health problems on top of this, so I told no-one.

My sleep started to suffer. My belief in myself as a mother, a wife, a clinician, and as a friend eroded away and I had to be forced into applying for consultant jobs.

I did apply, and was successful in securing a locum position. When I took up my locum consultant post, I felt a lot of pressure to be completely flexible and adaptable to the department's demands, always looking towards gaining a substantive post.

This chipped away at my resilience; no one would have thought I was suffering inside and having regular suicidal thoughts.

At home, I started to have nightmares about going into work and displayed depressive symptoms, unable to interact with my children or find any enjoyment in socialising or exercising. It brought back a lot of unpleasant memories from a previous traumatic relationship I had been in, and I felt myself spiralling downwards.

I did not want to go to my GP, and I didn't want to tell my manager. I had gently

tried to tell a couple of colleagues in work, and no-one reached out or followed up.

I was lost.

When I finally contacted Canopi (sobbing through my referral phone call), I felt supported from the get-go. I was even more fortunate to be matched with a wonderful therapist and attend online sessions from the comfort of my own home, at convenient time for me.

My therapist's gentle guidance helped me to open up and talk about the abuse I had previously suffered, and to gain the courage to seek help from my GP. I felt that I could finally be honest and start this journey towards a healthier and happier version of myself.

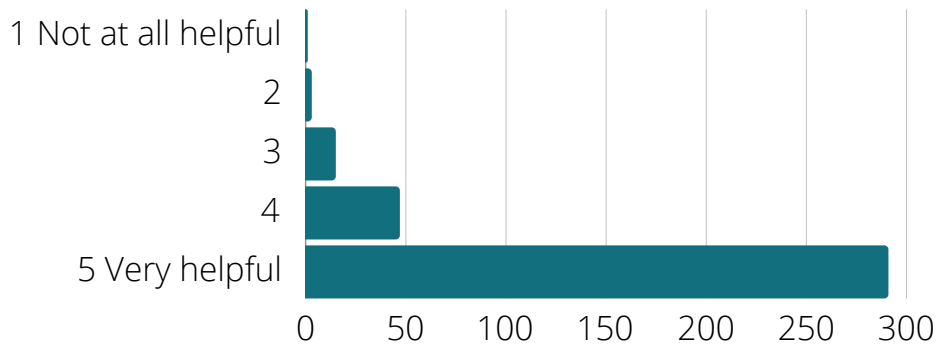
My mental health crisis affected not only me, but my husband, my three children and my friends. Without the support of Canopi, I think that there is a very real chance I would not be here, and I don't say that lightly.

"Thank you for your ongoing commitment and development of the service. What you are doing really and truly matters and makes a difference."

Service feedback

Feedback is important to us. We're always working to improve and streamline our service using the feedback we received from our clients. This year, 368 clients who finished therapy left us feedback.

How helpful were your interactions with the Canopi helpdesk?



94% of clients found their contact with a Doctor Advisor helpful or very helpful.



I felt genuinely listened to and all the available options were clearly explained.



Very friendly and understanding!



83% of clients felt that they got all or most of the help that they needed by accessing the Canopi service.



I would like to thank my therapist for their compassion - it helped me immensely.



A very supportive service which is totally confidential and treats each client and their problems individually.



89% of clients were likely or very likely to recommend the service to others.



I felt vulnerable asking for help but the Canopi process was simple to engage with. CBT helped me so much - I have different feelings about my traumatic incident since therapy.



Help us spread the word

Visit our website to download posters and request postcards.

canopi.nhs.wales

Connect with us

Follow us on social media for more information on our service, updates and recruitment opportunities.



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