

*Promoting Positive  
Mental Health*

# STRATEGIC PLAN

2018 - 2021



LIMERICK

**Mental Health  
Association**



# WELCOME

## FROM CHAIRPERSON - DR. JENNIFER McMAHON

I am delighted to present this Strategic Plan for Limerick Mental Health Association for the period 2018 – 2020.

This plan marks an important milestone in the development of Limerick Mental Health Association since its inception in 2002. The plan is also timely. Mental health has never been more important as our communities and people struggle to maintain wellbeing in the face of increasing challenge and adversity.

In Limerick Mental Health Association we do things differently. At the core of our strategic approach is the expectation that given the right knowledge and support everyone can enjoy good mental health and wellbeing. We do this by increasing mental health awareness in our community and supporting people experiencing mental health issues through a recovery approach. Importantly we work in partnership with users of the service, their families as well as statutory and community services.

The process we undertook to deliver this plan brought together a wide range of people including service users; staff; the Board; key funders; members of the community and key actors in the Limerick mental health landscape. We cannot thank them enough for their time and contribution.

Our strategy is a result of this process and provides a blueprint for the coming years. The clear vision and priorities set out here will ensure that we continue to be central to supporting Limerick peoples mental health into the future.



# FOREWORD

## FROM CLAIRE FLYNN, MANAGER, LIMERICK MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Limerick Mental Health Association is passionate about promoting positive mental health and the belief that recovery is possible. The volunteers on our board, the staff, the Le Cheile volunteers, our peers and the students who choose to support us with their time, expertise and experiences, share our belief. It is also our belief that, in being the best that we can be, we will make a difference to people's lives. While this plan has been developed for an organisation which is made up of a building, policies and structures, at its heart it is about people, particularly our members. Our members are welcoming, caring and supportive people. They inspire me every day.

It gives me great pleasure that LMHA and Le Cheile has grown to a point where we can prepare and present a Strategic Plan. This has been led by our incredible volunteer board members. They have put in many Saturday mornings, long week day evenings and numerous emails and phone calls for this. Thank you to our supporters at the HSE for your encouragement. Thank you to the many community and mental health services who support us every day. We look forward to continuing working and growing together.



# BACKGROUND

## ABOUT US

Limerick Mental Health Association (LMHA) was established in 2002 by local people in response to the unmet needs of people with mental health difficulties in the city. The aim was to provide a welcoming, non-judgmental space for people to share experiences, find support and participate in activities that promote wellbeing.

In the intervening 15 years, LMHA has grown significantly to become one of Limerick's leading mental health organisations. We now employ a small team of staff and are supported by committed and enthusiastic volunteers who are involved at all levels of the organisation; running activities, on the Board of Directors, designing programmes, offering peer support to other members and helping with office functions.

We are very proud of our premises in the heart of the city centre. From this welcoming, safe, holistic space, we support our members in their recovery. We consistently enhance our premises, programmes and services to meet the diverse needs of our members.

Our flagship peer support project, Le Chéile, was one of the first of its kind in Ireland. Through Le Chéile we provide support, friendship, activities and wellness programmes to people who are having difficulty coping or who are experiencing social isolation. At the heart of Le Chéile is the ethos of co-production: the active inclusion of all mental health stakeholders in the design and delivery of services and supports. These include service-users, service providers, their families, friends and supporters.





## OUR APPROACH

We are a person-centred organisation that works in partnership with people who live with, or are recovering from, mental health difficulties. We operate within best practice guidelines and use evidence-based approaches to ensure we operate to the highest standards. Our work is underpinned by the principles of recovery, peer support and community engagement.

### RECOVERY

We are committed to providing a recovery-oriented service, as demonstrated through our peer-support project, Le Chéile. We recognise that recovery is an ongoing process and is not always an end goal. Recovery is about a person's journey towards independence and embodies a belief that one has purpose and value with or without the symptoms of mental ill health. Putting recovery into action places a focus on self-care and building resilience, empowering individuals to be active in their plan for recovery, their treatment and management of their symptoms.

Recovery means different things to different people. It is made possible by the support and guidance of others, but ultimately it is about making informed choices as an individual on how best to manage one's own wellbeing and health. It involves individual choices, hope, independence, personal responsibility and participation in meaningful activities.

The work of LMHA is aligned to the National Framework for Recovery in Mental Health which supports mental health service providers in the delivery of quality, person-centred services.

### PEER SUPPORT

Peer support focuses on individuals' strengths, shared personal experiences and empathy with one another. It recognises that we are all experts in our own experience. LMHA believes that people with lived experience are best placed to support each other towards recovery and leading full, meaningful lives. This approach is central to Le Chéile. We are committed to a co-production model where our members are equal partners and an integral part of the design, delivery and evaluation of our peer support service; "the expert by experience working alongside the expert by profession".

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

LMHA has deep roots in Limerick, developed through many years of engaging with local communities. We build and nurture sustainable relationships to foster a collective vision and a joined-up approach to wellbeing for all people of Limerick.

Our volunteers represent diverse communities and are at the heart of LMHA's community ethos, providing commitment, energy, sensitivity and dedication.

## MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION

Since our foundation, we have been committed to raising awareness of mental health issues and promoting community wellbeing. Each year we lead and coordinate Limerick Mental Health Week which brings together over 30 partner organisations across Limerick. The aim is to generate discussion, reduce stigma, promote positive mental health and to highlight the range of supports and services available within local communities.

Throughout the year, we also host and support mental health events across the Mid-West Region, including wellness days, awareness campaigns and workshops.



## OUR GOVERNANCE

LMHA is structured as a company limited by guarantee and is governed by a Board of Directors. Our Board members have diverse skills and experience in mental health, social inclusion, community development and corporate service delivery.

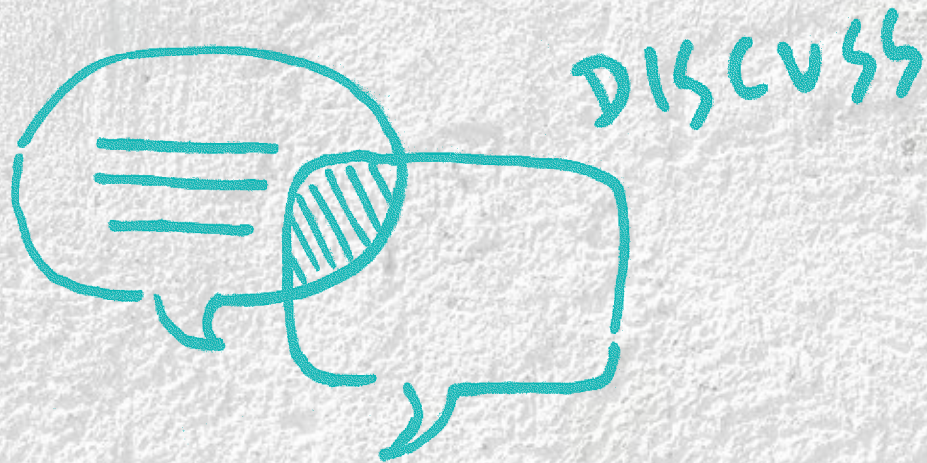
We are committed to developing and maintaining the highest standards of governance. To this end, a key priority of this strategic plan will be to ensure full compliance with the Charities Governance Code.

Through Mental Health Ireland, LMHA is registered with the Charities Regulator.



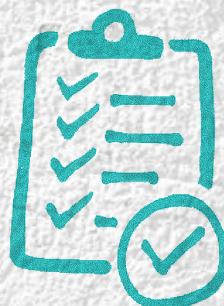
## MENTAL HEALTH IRELAND

LMHA is affiliated to, and shares the aims of, Mental Health Ireland (MHI) which is a national voluntary organisation. Established in 1966, MHI aims to promote positive mental health and wellbeing to all individuals and communities in Ireland. It has a network of 82 Mental Health Associations throughout the country, one of which is LMHA. LMHA works closely with MHI's Area Development Officer in the development of its services and in the promotion of positive mental health in Limerick City.



## DEVELOPING OUR STRATEGY

In developing this strategic plan, we undertook a comprehensive consultation process to ensure that the voices of all those connected to us, both internally and externally, were heard. We engaged with a variety of stakeholders in an inclusive and participative manner through interactive workshops and meetings. These were attended by our members, staff, volunteers, other mental-health service providers, community organisations, our funders (HSE), Mental Health Ireland and the general public. The consultation process helped us to improve our understanding of how LMHA can better meet the needs of those coping with mental health issues. It enabled us to hone our services to ensure that we are supporting people in a meaningful way and are doing so in partnership with other agencies and organisations. We believe that this plan will enable us to grow over the next four years and to work closely with our members to build an organisation based on respect and collaboration.



# WHAT WE DO

We run activities, classes and programmes which strengthen recovery, confidence and resilience:

- Wellness groups and classes
- Self-esteem and personal development programmes
- Self-management recovery classes (Wellness Recovery Action Plan, WRAP)
- Creative classes and activities
- Health & physical wellbeing programmes and activities
- Social outings

We provide support and information to anyone affected by mental health issues; individuals, families, supporters, friends:

- Drop-in Centre providing practical information in a warm, welcoming, confidential environment
- Signposting service to other mental health services and supports
- Support and understanding provided by peers with lived experience of recovery

We assist our members in accessing other supports, services and opportunities which further their recovery:

- Links to HSE and other mental health services
- Access to community-based supports and activities
- Strengthening connections with family, supporters and friends
- Volunteering opportunities, both in-house and externally

We provide training and raise awareness on mental health issues:

- We run Limerick Mental Health Week, in collaboration with local organisations
- We design and deliver mental health training in communities, including places of work
- We collaborate with local and national campaigns, which promote positive mental health

# OUR VISION, OUR MISSION & OUR VALUES

## OUR VISION

A Limerick where people value their own and each others' mental health as an important part of living well;

where people who experience mental health difficulties can recover wellbeing and reach their full potential within an informed and supportive community

## OUR MISSION

We promote positive mental health and wellbeing in the Limerick community

We support adults on their recovery journey through peer-led engagement & activities

## OUR VALUES

The work of LMHA is underpinned by the core values of:

Trust & Respect

Transparency & Accountability

Collaboration & Participation

Equality & Inclusion

Empowerment & Hopefulness

# THEMES AND GOALS

## THEME 1

### PEER SUPPORT SERVICES

#### GOAL 1

**Offer quality supports and services which meet the recovery and wellness needs of our members**



## THEME 2

### PROMOTING COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH

#### GOAL 2

**Promote community mental health and wellbeing through information, training, events and campaigns**



# THEMES AND GOALS

## THEME 3

### COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP

#### GOAL 3

**Strengthen our links with families, supporters, communities, the HSE and other mental health stakeholders to improve our members' recovery journey**

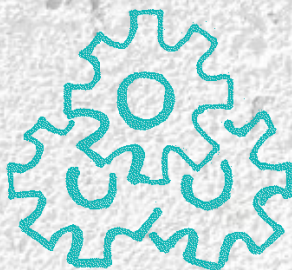


## THEME 4

### ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

#### GOAL 4

**Ensure our organisation is effective and working to best practice standards**



## **THEME 1**

### **PEER SUPPORT SERVICES**

#### **GOAL 1**

**Offer quality supports and services which meet the recovery and wellness needs of our members**

### **THEMATIC OBJECTIVES**

- 1.** Deliver a broad range of supports and programmes which promote recovery, self-care and wellbeing.
- 2.** Ensure our members are kept at the heart of their own recovery journey through collaboration and co-production.
- 3.** Develop our peer support model, which values the lived experience, in the design and delivery of our services & supports
- 4.** Strengthen our approach to recovery-oriented supports and services
- 5.** Target groups and communities that are particularly vulnerable to mental health

### **KEY ACTIONS WE WILL DELIVER**

- Offer peer support delivered by people with lived experience of mental health issues
- Run creative, physical & wellness programmes and classes which build confidence and facilitate progression
- Deliver the WRAP programme to support self-management of recovery
- Enhance our drop-in service by refurbishing our facilities, training volunteers and extending opening hours
- Connect members to other supports which facilitate recovery, such as the Recovery College, Employability Limerick & Limerick and Clare Education & Training Board
- Introduce processes that show recovery and progression pathways
- Involve people with lived experiences in the design and delivery of our programmes and services
- Identify and engage with groups at increased risk of mental health issues, such as migrant communities, young people and isolated older people
- In partnership with Connecting for Life Mid-West, deliver activities which promote wellbeing and support people at risk of suicide and self-harm



## **THEME 2**

### **PROMOTING COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH**

#### **GOAL 2**

**Promote community mental health and wellbeing through information, training, events and campaigns**

### **THEMATIC OBJECTIVES**

- 2.1** Strengthen awareness, knowledge and understanding of mental health issues
- 2.2** Enhance our mental health information, advisory and signposting services
- 2.3** Build an integrated approach to maintaining positive mental health, using community based strategies and initiatives

### **KEY ACTIONS WE WILL DELIVER**

- Run Limerick Mental Health Week annually, in collaboration with other stakeholders
- Co-produce and deliver training to groups and organisations in the community, statutory and private sectors on mental health awareness and stigma reduction
- Participate in local, regional and national programmes and activities which raise awareness and reduce stigma
- Create an information hub which provides information on mental health issues and signposting to local, regional and national services
- Through our website and digital media, provide accessible information and resources to people with mental health difficulties, their families, supporters, friends and communities
- Provide training to community-based organisations on supporting people in their community with mental health issues
- Work with local organisations to foster community mental health through arts, sports and leisure activities

## THEME 3

### COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP

#### GOAL 3

**Strengthen our links with families, supporters, communities, the HSE and other mental health stakeholders to improve our members' recovery journey**

### THEMATIC OBJECTIVES

- 3.1** Collaborate with the HSE and other mental organisations to facilitate a joined-up approach to supporting our members' recovery
- 3.2** Support the involvement of families, supporters and communities in our members' recovery journey
- 3.3** Collaborate with other mental health organisations to strengthen local, regional and national responses to mental health needs communities that are particularly vulnerable to mental health

### KEY ACTIONS WE WILL DELIVER

- Raise awareness within the HSE of the role and services offered by LMHA
- Run targeted activities and events for our members' families and supporters
- Participate in the HSE Area Forum to help ensure the voice of service-users is heard
- Collaborate with Mental Health Ireland to promote mental health and to identify and implement best practice in mental health supports and services
- Engage with other peer support services in the region to build relationships and share best practice
- Participate in networks and fora which promote improved services in mental health, such as Healthy Limerick and Connecting for Life Mid-West

## **THEME 4**

### **ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

#### **GOAL 4**

**Ensure our organisation is effective and working to best practice standards**

### **THEMATIC OBJECTIVES**

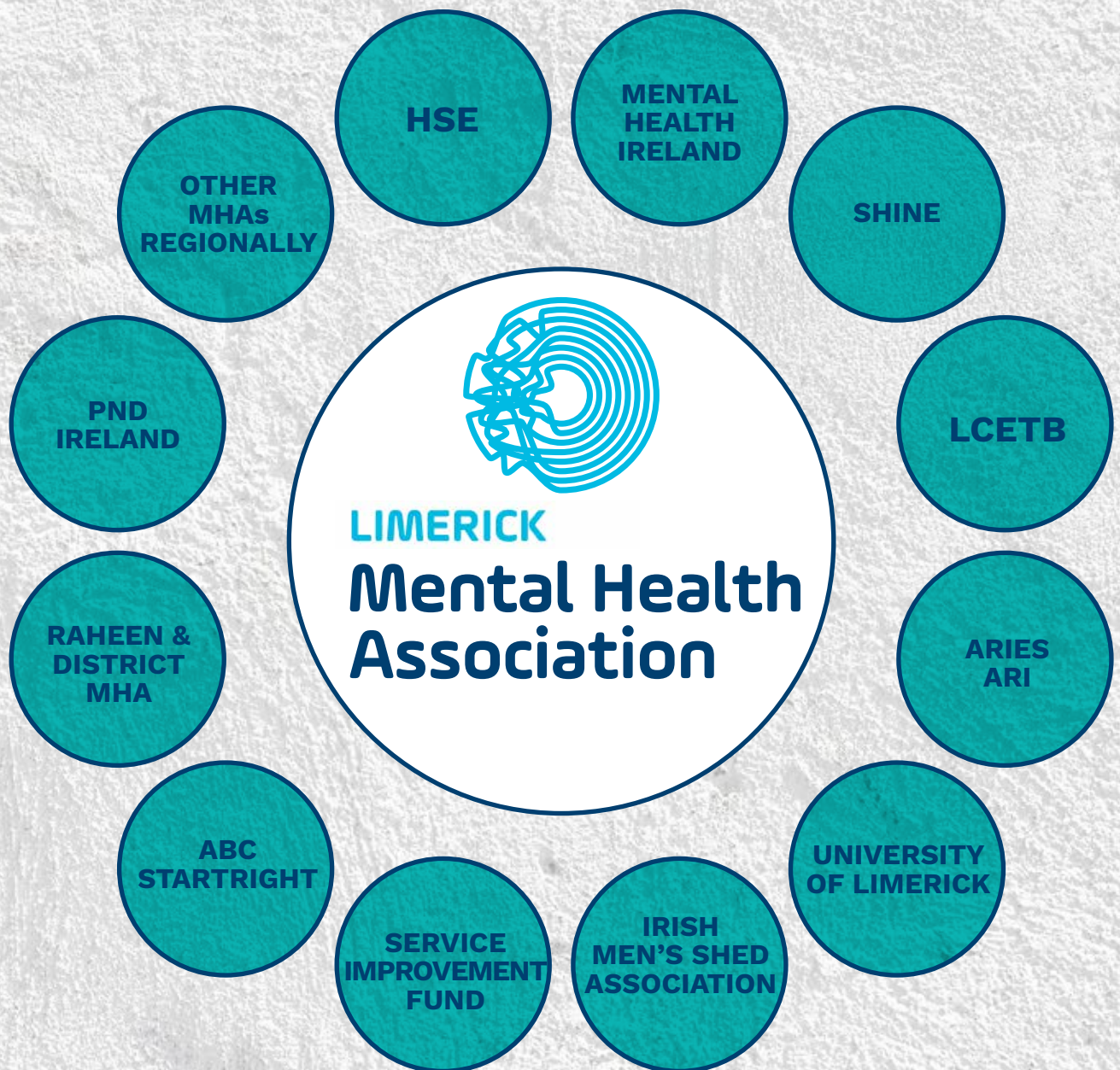
- 4.1** Build the skills and expertise of our staff and volunteers to ensure their professional development and wellbeing
- 4.2** Ensure our governance and management framework is accountable, transparent and compliant
- 4.3** Strengthen processes which capture the impact of our services and programmes
- 4.4** Strengthen our capacity to fulfil our mission by optimising existing and accessing additional resources

### **KEY ACTIONS WE WILL DELIVER**

- Increase our staff and volunteer numbers to grow our membership and services
- Provide training to staff, volunteers and board members on peer support, co-production and recovery based approaches
- Produce annual operations plan and budgets to implement our Strategic Plan, with integrated monitoring and evaluation processes
- Develop the role of our Members Committee to inform our work and ensure continuing feedback and improvement of our services
- Regularly review our Board of Directors to ensure a skilled and experienced membership underpinning the organisation's strategic growth 2018-2021
- Achieve full voluntary compliance with the Governance Code by 2021
- Engage in research which strengthens understanding of mental health and which informs service improvements
- Continue to invest in our premises to ensure a welcoming, fit-for-purpose environment for our members
- Actively pursue funding and resources to enable us to grow our services and supports



## COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP



## IMPLEMENTING OUR STRATEGY AND ASSESSING OUR PROGRESS

Each year, we develop an annual work plan which outlines our activities for the year ahead. Over the lifetime of this strategy we will strengthen this by incorporating processes which help us assess our achievements. We will also enhance our review and evaluation systems to ensure continuing feedback and improvement of our services.



LIMERICK

**Mental Health  
Association**

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