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Building resilience in the fishing sector in Wales

**Lucia Homolova, Charlotte N.B. Grey,
Nicole Burchett, Alisha R. Davies**



Authors

Lucia Homolova¹, Charlotte N.B. Grey¹, Nicole Burchett², Alisha R. Davies¹

Affiliations

¹ Research and Evaluation Division, Knowledge Directorate, Public Health Wales

² Mental Health Foundation

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Name	Organisation
Leo Clarke, <i>Postdoctoral Marine and Fisheries Research Scientist</i>	Bangor University/Welsh Government
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Hefyn Edwards, <i>Funding Policy Manager, Marine and Fisheries</i>	Welsh Government
Nia Griffith, <i>Marketing and Events Coordinator</i>	Menter a Busnes
Owen Haines, <i>South Wales Seafood Cluster Manager</i>	Menter a Busnes
Phil McGrath, <i>Project Manager</i>	Menter a Busnes, The Port to Plate Project
Sian Davies, <i>Cluster Manager</i>	Menter a Busnes
Jeremy Percy, <i>Fisherman/Director</i>	New Under Ten Fishermen's Association
Isabel Hargreaves, <i>Wife of a Fisherman/Manager</i>	Welsh Fishermen's Association
Marion Warlow, <i>WFA-CPC Development Officer Mid to South Wales</i>	Welsh Fishermen's Association
Trevor Jones, <i>Mussels Fisherman/Director</i>	Welsh Fishermen's Association
Elisabeth Morris-Webb, <i>PhD Candidate</i>	Bangor University

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Disclaimer

This research programme was undertaken and completed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. This programme was undertaken within the context of the United Kingdom (UK) leaving the European Union (EU), but many of the uncertainties identified in the stakeholder engagement are longstanding issues, where Brexit may exacerbate the impact. Although we recognise that COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the fishing industry, its income, and closure of export and domestic markets (1) – this is beyond the focus and content of this report.

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Research and Evaluation Division
Knowledge Directorate
Public Health Wales NHS Trust
Number 2 Capital Quarter
Tyndall Street
Cardiff
CF10 4BZ

Tel: +44 (0)29 2022 7744

Email: phw.research@wales.nhs.uk

 @PHREWales

 @PublicHealthWales

Mental Health Foundation
Workbench
16 Neptune Court
Cardiff
CF24 5PJ

Tel: +44(0) 2921 679400

Email: info@mentalhealth.org.uk

 @mentalhealth

www.mentalhealth.org.uk/wales

Foreword

With over 870 miles of coastal path and more than half of its population living in coastal areas, the history of Wales is closely intertwined with its people's interactions with the sea.

For decades, centuries even, fishing was the main industry for numerous towns and communities along the Welsh coast and, even though the days of Victorian docks full of trawlers and drifters are gone, the fishing sector remains an important part of the Welsh economy and cultural heritage.



The Wales seafood industry is a vibrant and diverse business that boasts a range of both traditional and innovative fisheries and aquaculture operations. Top quality seafood lands daily at ports, harbours and beaches along the length of the coast, from Cardiff to Connah's Quay.

It remains an industry that is very significant to the local economy and vital for the long-term sustainability of many coastal communities; and it is at risk.

This important report highlights the implications of the uncertainties facing the fishing sector in Wales. Many of these uncertainties are longstanding issues, the impact of which might be further exacerbated by Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic. With 90% of fisheries exports directed to the European Union and approximately three quarters of the Welsh fleet made up of small fishing vessels, these unprecedented circumstances bring an extra source of stress.

In fishing communities, good health is critical to the ability of individuals and families to maintain viable livelihoods, hence increasing awareness and supporting workers' mental health and social well-being is important, timely and relevant.

A public health approach, as outlined in this report, underpinned by the best available evidence and co-production with industry workers and their families, is the only sustainable way to help build resilience in the sector. In applying the proposed framework, there is an opportunity in Wales to build on the long legacy of the fishing sector and be an innovator in addressing the key issues of mental health and well-being amongst fishing communities.

Dr Antonis Kousoulis

Director of England and Wales
Mental Health Foundation



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Executive summary

As the United Kingdom (UK) journeys towards leaving the European Union (EU), there remains considerable uncertainty for the fishing industry, fishermen, and coastal communities in Wales.

Periods of significant uncertainty can have detrimental impact on health and well-being. During these times it is of considerable importance to both understand and address underlying causes of anxiety and distress, alongside supporting the health and mental well-being of those most likely to be affected.

This report aims to develop a framework to support the mental health and well-being of fishermen at times of uncertainty, and consider how it could be translated into action. To achieve this, we combined a review of the international literature from the past ten years with the collective views of thirteen stakeholders from across the fishing sector in Wales.

This research programme was undertaken within the context of the UK leaving the EU. The findings reflect the evidence and views at a point in time before the COVID-19 pandemic. However, many of the uncertainties and challenges identified are longstanding issues facing fishermen in Wales, that have the potential to be further exacerbated by Brexit and COVID-19. The approaches outlined for supporting mental health and well-being remain timely and relevant to today's context.

Key findings

The report draws out the key uncertainties and challenges faced by fishermen and fishing communities in Wales; and outlines preventative approaches for protecting against health impacts and promoting mental health and well-being, to strengthen resilience.

Preventing uncertainty and challenge, and protecting against the impact on mental health and well-being (see Section 2.1)

Reflections from the stakeholder engagement workshops in North and South West Wales identified five main uncertainties and challenges facing fishermen in Wales, alongside suggested opportunities for action, summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Five key challenges facing fishermen in Wales and outlined opportunities for action

Uncertainty and challenge	Opportunity for action
1. Perceived lack of empowerment and sense of control related to policy decisions and fisheries management (Section 2.1.1)	Engage with fishermen to co-produce policy development and implementation.
2. Regulation and administrative burden (Section 2.1.2)	Engage with fishermen to develop practical, easily accessible advice and guidance; and streamlined administrative processes for business management functions.
3. The sustainability of the fishing industry in Wales (both supply and demand) (Section 2.1.3)	Ensure visible enforcement of regulations that is embedded into the fishing community. Identify the most effective routes to champion the interests of the Welsh fishing industry at a UK level, and co-develop a sustainable and secure Welsh fishing sector for future generations.
4. Financial stress (Section 2.1.4)	Raise awareness of financial support available, and strengthen business and financial skills.
5. Maintaining good health (Section 2.1.5)	Protect health through adherence to health and safety legislation, and extend the narrative to support general health and well-being.

Uncertainty around the potential impact of Brexit on the fishing industry in Wales further exacerbates several of the challenges that are already affecting fishermen. Stakeholders highlighted their concerns around the viability of fishing as a business and resulting financial insecurity, alongside limited control over national policy decisions and fisheries management – all contributing to a feeling of a lack of empowerment and control. Whilst the number of stakeholders at the engagement workshops was low, the issues raised reflect the wider national and international literature. The uncertainties and actions identified within the context of Brexit should be considered in conjunction with broader challenges facing the fishing sector in Wales, and the cumulative impact on well-being.



Promoting mental health and well-being (see Section 2.2)

During the engagement workshops, there was a strong focus on physical health and the importance of staying fit due to the physical demands of the job. Challenges identified included a tendency to prioritise work over health, and the need to address the lack of engagement for the adoption of wearing lifejackets. Mental health was less prominent in discussions, with a lack of understanding of the breadth of mental health issues affecting fishermen and fishing communities in Wales. It is difficult to ascertain from the findings whether mental health is less of a concern for the fishing community, or whether there is in fact, an unrecognised need, or possibly a stigma attached to mental health. However, frontline service representatives at the workshops did reflect on some of the mental health problems affecting fishermen that they were observing, and challenges that were causing significant stress for fishermen.

Whilst a mental health and well-being narrative was not prominent in discussions, stakeholders did identify a number of bespoke resources for fishermen in Wales which addressed mental health and well-being or financial distress (detrimental to mental well-being). These included:

- mental well-being support for commercial fishermen delivered online or through helplines,
- practical and financial support targeted to commercial fishermen and their families,
- outreach services supporting fishermen.

International and national examples addressing the mental health and well-being of fishermen (see Section 2.2.2)

There is a lack of robust, evidence-based interventions specifically designed to support the mental health of fishermen and their families. However, we did find three programmes in the international literature that had strong rationale and sound theoretical approach, and were developed and implemented in partnership with fishermen, public health, and organisations linked to the fishing industry. All three of these programmes focused primarily on physical health promotion, with mental health considered but secondary to physical health (see Box 1).

Box 1: International and national interventions addressing fishermen's mental health and well-being

1. Sustainable Fishing Families (Australia, 2017-18): a health promotion programme based on the established Sustainable Farming Families™ programme, addressing specific needs and health issues of fishermen and fishing families to promote safer and healthier work practices and encourage health behaviour change. The impact included good retention over the programme duration and positive change in health behaviour, although the numbers were small.

2. The Finnmark 'Health and Well-being' Intervention Study (Norway, 1988-91): a community-based health promotion programme with empowerment principles, addressing health inequalities and high mortality in fishermen, workers in the fishing industry, and fishing communities. The impact included improvements in awareness, lifestyle and cardiovascular risk factors, and mental health variables.

3a. Bridlington Health Trainer programme (UK, 2011-13) – phase 1: a health trainer-led health promotion programme for hard-to-reach fishing communities delivered as an outreach service in harbours, to support lifestyle change using a behaviour change model. The impact included improvements in lifestyle factors and better engagement with health.

3b. Seafit programme (UK, 2018-20) – phase 2: a coordinated delivery of mobile health outreach services providing free health checks and dental care, and including health trainers and mental health and well-being support. The impact included improvements in uptake of services.

Stakeholders at the workshops reflected on the transferability of the three international interventions to Wales. There was consensus that traditional health services or any fixed delivery model would not work well in a Welsh context, due to the fishermen's irregular working patterns and seasonal variability of their work. Wider health promotion approaches were perceived as difficult to implement, due to Wales consisting of many unique, small fishing ports, where way of life can vary from port to port. Any approaches implemented to support health would need to be place-based, tailored to locality and fishing type, and built on local connections, knowledge, and health needs. This would need to include good understanding of fishing culture (e.g. discreet and informal approach); a delivery plan with a focus on building trust, visibility, and respect among local communities; and using existing local networks and establishing partnerships with trusted industry experts, welfare groups, and local health providers.

The approach that particularly resonated with stakeholders was mobile health outreach and taking health services to where fishermen are (i.e. to harbours and ports). This offers a model of flexible health care delivery, which can be delivered at regular intervals and adapted to local context.

A successful mobile health outreach service should be:

- place-based (considering context and tailored to local health needs),
- provided locally in ports and harbours (where the fishermen are),
- delivered in partnership with trusted local providers,
- delivered regularly,
- flexible appointments (e.g. drop-ins, SMS appointment reminder service, flexibility to rebook missed appointments) (2),
- delivered informally.

Across the international interventions (see Box 1, Executive Summary), and supported by the evidence review and stakeholder engagement, common factors supporting good engagement across the fishing sector were identified and should inform future action. These include providing services that remove barriers for engagement, co-producing programmes and tools with the fisheries sector and communities, and maintaining a focus on business and practical solutions that include supporting behaviour change (see Table 2).

Table 2: Key challenges to engaging fishermen in health and lessons learned from the approaches identified within the literature review

Challenges to engaging fishermen in mental health*	Approaches identified in the review
<p>Barriers to accessing health care: the need to prioritise work and generate income over health (i.e. time in work could be lost to time spent in health care appointments)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating community-based health and well-being strategies with ‘soft entry points’, localised where the fishermen are, to provide informal services through which fishermen can access health information and are delivered with fishing industry bodies, fishing welfare groups and health providers, to target fishermen’s specific needs (3). As well as improving socio-cultural norms (i.e. reducing stigma, encouraging communication, increasing help-seeking behaviour) to reduce barriers around accessing health care (4). • Ensuring a broad and flexible appointment system availability (e.g. SMS reminder services, ease of rearranging appointment) (2). • Ensuring a broad support service provision rather than a ‘one-size fits all’ approach (5), with a consistent presence of those delivering health care in the community (2). • Ensuring time is spent on building relationships and trust within the fishermen and fishing community (2). • Ensuring that barriers to health care that includes organisational/operational challenges are removed by allowing flexible health care provision for outreach services (e.g. physiotherapy and dentistry) that are complementary to existing NHS services (4,5).
<p>General health deprivation in fishing communities/fishermen as a population at high risk of poor health outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach, community-health promotion, as well as providing support to encourage behaviour/lifestyle changes and reducing risk factors (2). • Through co-production, grassroots/bottom-up driven approaches (6–8). Take forward and fund harbour infrastructure improvements (e.g. working conditions, cross-agency working and enabling outreach health promotion) that will help to target the existing deprivation and neglect found in many UK fishing communities (5).



Challenges to engaging fishermen in mental health*

Approaches identified in the review

Seasonality of work (e.g. long working hours, remote working/living) resulting in the difficulty to access traditionally-delivered health care services (i.e. appointments, waiting lists)

- Create a single point of contact through which fishermen and their families can be informed of other additional services (5).
- Ensuring that barriers to health care that include organisational/operational challenges are removed by allowing flexible health care provision for outreach services (e.g. physiotherapy and dentistry) that are complementary to existing NHS services (4,5).
- Building on cross-agency working and partnerships between public health, fishing industry organisations and third sector, to ensure a targeted approach to fishermen's specific needs (7,8).

Lack of clear referral pathways and awareness amongst health professionals of existing mental health and support services targeted to fishermen and their families' needs

- Raise awareness of available support and develop outreach services e.g. maritime welfare charities and support that can be provided to fishermen (5).
- Collaborative funding for sustainable support to address the needs of fishermen. Bringing together fishing stakeholders interested in developing and funding solutions identified by fishermen as having the greatest impact (5). Ensuring sustainability of grassroots/bottom-up community-driven approaches, through prioritisation of health and well-being by fishing stakeholders (7,8).
- Create a single point of contact through which fishermen and their families can be informed of other additional services (5).

Challenges to engaging fishermen in mental health*

Approaches identified in the review

Reluctance to look after own health and engage in help-seeking behaviours (e.g. socio-cultural norms in male-dominated industry, tendency towards risk-taking culture in relation to health care and minimising health problems)

- Support behavioural change to improve safety (5).
- Womenⁱ in fishing communities have an important role to play in recognising health issues (particularly mental health issues, improving access to services, health advocacy and identifying effective strategies to address issues) by having credibility and direct knowledge of the fishing industry (3,9). Ensuring that the burden of men's health care is not shifted to women – rather encourage a culture that encourages/enables fishermen to take ownership of their own health.
- Grassroots/bottom-up community-driven approaches that link with health care providers and third sector support services (2,3,6,10–12).
- The importance of the personal qualities of the staff at the centre of fishermen's targeted health care delivery e.g. empathy, approachable, non-judgemental, friendly, accessible (locally recruited) (13).

Strong attachment to 'fishing way of life', with preference for practical problem-solving as opposed to help-seeking behaviour (i.e. accessing health care services)

- Grassroots/bottom-up driven and community-driven approaches that link in with health care providers and third sector support services (2,3,6,10–12).
- Provide action-oriented advice and support through animateursⁱⁱ to engage and work intensively with fishermen to develop ideas that can make a difference to their safety and working conditions, and develop their business to make it more economically efficient/diversification (5).
- Practical problem-solving (e.g. using solution-focused approaches) for any behaviour change intervention relevant to the fisheries context, with simplified language (2,9).
- Building on cross-agency working and partnerships between public health, fishing industry organisations and third sector, to ensure a targeted approach to fishermen's specific needs (7,8).

ⁱ The key role of women in the fishing industry has been particularly highlighted by previous research, with reference to women often being integral to the promotion of good health and well-being in the fishing communities (3,9).

ⁱⁱ Animation is a term used in some parts of the European fishing industry. Animation involves providing active, hands-on support from a dedicated individual (an 'animateur') from within the local industry to identify and work up the details of projects, with and on behalf of, fishermen. The animateur is providing more than business support as they are required to work intensively with individuals and groups of fishermen to provide the expertise to achieve things which they would be unable to address on their own. In this respect the animateur's role is much more than a facilitator or co-ordinator (40).

Challenges to engaging fishermen in mental health*

Approaches identified in the review

Independent and isolated nature of the work, resulting in limited experience of working with public/private bodies and dislike of 'officialdom'

- Research highlights that women in fishing communities, in particular, can act as valuable links between the community and the public bodies. They also have an important role to play in early recognition of health issues (particularly mental health issues, improving access to services, and health advocacy (and identifying effective strategies to address issues) by having credibility and direct knowledge of the fishing industry (3,9). At the same time, ensuring that the burden of men's health care is not shifted to women – rather encourage a culture that encourages/enables fishermen to take ownership of their own health.
- Fishing industry bodies also have established relationships with and can reach fishermen. They have an important role to play in linking fishermen with third parties. For example, small-scale fishermen would benefit from strong, effective, collective representation to represent the distinct needs of the small-scale fishing sector (e.g. championing/advocacy/trade) (5).

* Stakeholders in West Wales identified with all of the listed challenges and solutions; whilst stakeholders in North Wales identified less with the listed challenges as in North Wales physical health was seen as a priority (staying fit to be able to cope with a physically demanding job).



Conclusion and recommendations (see Section 3)

This programme of work was undertaken within the context of the UK leaving the EU, but many of the uncertainties identified in the stakeholder engagement are longstanding issues, where Brexit may exacerbate the impact. The modest numbers of stakeholders that took part in the workshops may not represent the full views of all those working in the fishing sector in Wales, nonetheless evidence collected from the workshops was very much in line with the international literature. The strength of this work is that it draws on both stakeholder engagement and a robust evidence review, to create recommendations for consideration, to prevent, protect, and promote mental health and well-being in fishermen in Wales.

Recommendations to prevent the uncertainty and challenge from adversity, and protect against the impact on mental health and well-being:

Develop and implement a national, strategic vision for a sustainable Welsh fishing industry, co-produced with the fishing community and promoted locally, nationally, and internationally.

Identify the most effective routes to champion the interests of the Welsh fishing industry at UK and international level, and increase the visibility of those actions.

Protect against the impact on well-being through improved provision of financial advice and business support for fishermen and the wider fishing family.

Protect against the impact on well-being by encouraging visible enforcement of regulation.

Recommendations to maintain physical health and promote mental health and well-being amongst fishermen and fishing communities:

Promote well-being through improved access to health care via a flexible delivery model built in partnership with local providers and networks.

Raise awareness of health and well-being support through multi-agency partnerships including local health care providers, welfare agencies, and industry experts; in order to build on local networks and knowledge, and engage with and access fishing communities.

Promote well-being by extending support to include fishermen and the wider fishing family.

Increase our understanding of health needs amongst fishermen and their communities to inform action.

Consider promoting mental health awareness amongst fishermen and organisations working with fishermen.



1. Context and aims

Brief introduction to the fishing industry and fishermen in Wales

The Welsh fisheries sector is different in size and nature to elsewhere in the UK (14), with a small fishing fleet and limited economic footprint (5). In Wales, 90% of fisheries exports are to the EU, and Asia via EU trade agreements; and the fisheries sector is dominated by shellfish (from aquaculture or wild environments) and with some sea fishing of finfish, and fish processing (14,15). Welsh seafood is predominantly exported fresh or alive and is highly perishable (this can be as little as two days for some live shellfish), therefore relying on a seamless trading route (15,17). As Wales is export-dependent, this generates social and economic risk that will be accentuated by any challenges to supply and demand (16).

The fisheries sector in Wales is worth £18.2m gross value added (GVA), and the total value of Welsh fisheries exports is about £22m (approximately 22% of total UK exports by value) (15). Although there are many similarities between farming and fishing, compared to the Common Agricultural Policy and subsidies provided to farmers, there is a lack of similar financial support for fishermen (5) from the European Marine and Fisheries Funds (EMFF) element of the Common Fisheries Policy (14,15); which does not provide the fisheries sector with an equivalent of direct farm support payments.

According to Welsh Government (15) the Welsh fishing fleet is mostly made up of small vessels and is already vulnerable to economic fluctuation, with average profit margins of 0%, with some small fleets running at loss. The majority of fishermen are not able to influence their profit margin, selling catches on contract, through merchant collection, or through market auction (5). The small vessels also restrict their ability to fish for long periods in the offshore region (12-200 nautical miles (nm)) or on the high seas (14,15), and any new opportunities for fishing outside this 12nm zone, post-Brexit, would only be possible by investing in new suitable vessels (15).

In Wales, there is >870 miles of coastlineⁱⁱⁱ, and 60% of the population live and work in the coastal zone (5). The Welsh fishing industry is characterised by small businesses (15) bringing employment and economic activity (19), including tourism (15). For coastal communities, the sea and associated activities play an important role in well-being, jobs, recreation, culture and heritage (15), as well as connecting communities through place-based affections and connections (24). Commitment to the sustainable management of Wales' marine environment as an important resource is key to maintaining a productive and resilient marine ecosystem, in line with the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015) (15).

ⁱⁱⁱ Length of Wales' coastal path

The potential for health impacts of uncertainty on fishermen in Wales

According to Welsh Government (15), there were 756 full time fishermen in Wales; and according to the non-departmental public body Seafish (17), there were 52 individuals employed in shellfish processing sites in Wales. The number of fishermen is likely an underestimate because of many casual and part-time crew members who may not be captured in official figures (5). UK fishermen are largely self-employed, and vulnerable to changes in fish stocks, as well as economic and policy changes (4,20). Employment insecurity, and difficulties accessing investment to capitalise on opportunities, can contribute to psychological distress in times of crisis from income loss (23) – evident through the demand on maritime welfare charities (5). The employment insecurity can have a direct and indirect effect on poor health outcomes (21,22).

The Welsh Government, through its national strategy ‘Prosperity for All’, is committed to improving the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of its people (25). In particular, it states its commitment to delivering a new, modernised fisheries policy for Wales following Brexit (25). The impact of leaving the EU on the Welsh fisheries sector is not yet fully known, but the experience of the Brexit process is one of significant financial uncertainty for fishermen^{iv}, as the evidence suggests that they are a population that is likely to be affected by the transition pre and post-Brexit (15,26). Evidence shows that changes in trade agreements, economic policy, and periods of uncertainty can have a detrimental impact on mental well-being (27–31). In such times, efforts to reduce uncertainty (where possible), alongside supporting mental health should be intensified (32). Similar to the situation facing farmers (33), uncertainty within the fisheries sector as a result of Brexit could have a detrimental impact on the health and well-being of Welsh fishermen, their families, and coastal communities. However, it is important to note that although fishermen are typically managed under the same policy^v and employment^{vi} umbrella as farmers, the challenges that fishermen face are different, particularly in terms of uncertainties and employment insecurities linked to being a resource-dependent occupation with relatively weak property rights and insecure management arrangements (22,34,35). Health is generally not incorporated into fisheries policy and governance systems, despite good health being vital for the sustainability of the fisheries sector and fishing communities (35).

Post-Brexit trading scenarios and future funding mechanisms will challenge the Welsh fisheries sector, with most vessels, fishermen, and ports likely to be ‘net losers’ from Brexit (36), due to uncertainty around future trade, tariffs, export checks, border delays and fishing rights in the UK (26). Fishermen are a population that is already susceptible to a range of health issues linked to their occupation (e.g. accidents and injuries). Traditionally greater emphasis has been placed on understanding the physical health of fishermen (e.g. health and safety). There is limited information available on the mental health of fishermen, but the emerging literature does point to poor mental health being prevalent among fishermen (22,35).

^{iv} For the purposes of this report the term ‘fishermen’ includes ‘men, women and related workers in the fishing industry’. During the workshops participants highlighted that they preferred the term ‘fishermen’ over ‘fishers’, which they did not identify with. To note: In Wales, the processing sector is very small (4%) compared to wider fishing and aquaculture. The literature on fishermen’s health is focused predominantly on marine/commercial fishermen, although much is transferable and relevant to a Welsh context, and to related workers within the fisheries sector. It is important to remember that Welsh marine fishing for the most part takes place close to the shore in small vessels rather than further offshore or on the high seas.

^v For example: all are coordinated under Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (UK Government); similarly in Welsh Government they are grouped under the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs.

^{vi} ‘Agriculture, forestry and fishing’ – are all grouped in the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Labour Force Survey (64), and similarly in other international labour surveys.

Aim: Developing a framework to support the mental health and well-being of fishermen

Given the uncertainties surrounding Brexit and challenges facing fishermen, and the potential impact of these uncertainties on health and well-being, there is a need to better understand how to best support fishermen and their communities in Wales. The aim of this report, funded by the Welsh Government, was to develop a framework to support the mental health and well-being of fishermen at times of uncertainty, and identify considerations for translation into action.

Our approach

To develop the framework we combined an evidence review of the international literature with the collective views of thirteen representatives from across the fishing sector in Wales on supporting the mental health and well-being of fishermen in Wales.

Evidence review

We carried out a review using systematic principles to review the international evidence base for interventions specifically focused on supporting fishermen's mental health, well-being and resilience published from 2009 to 2019 in five key health research databases. Given the time available, we have not completed a full, in-depth systematic review, or fully explored supporting evidence-based practice from non-fishing populations, which may be transferrable to this population. A key limitation was the lack of robust, evidence-based programmes specifically designed to support the mental health, well-being and resilience in fishermen with a demonstrable impact on outcomes. Full details of the review are available in the Supplementary Material at Public Health Wales, Research and Evaluation.

Engagement with the fishing sector

To ensure relevance to the fishing sector in Wales we undertook focused stakeholder engagement activities in early March 2020, to discuss: the key challenges facing the fishing sector in Wales; the impact of the challenges on mental health and well-being; the potential solutions to prevent challenges and protect against impacts; to understand and map existing support available in Wales; and to identify transferrable lessons from the evidence review to a Welsh context.

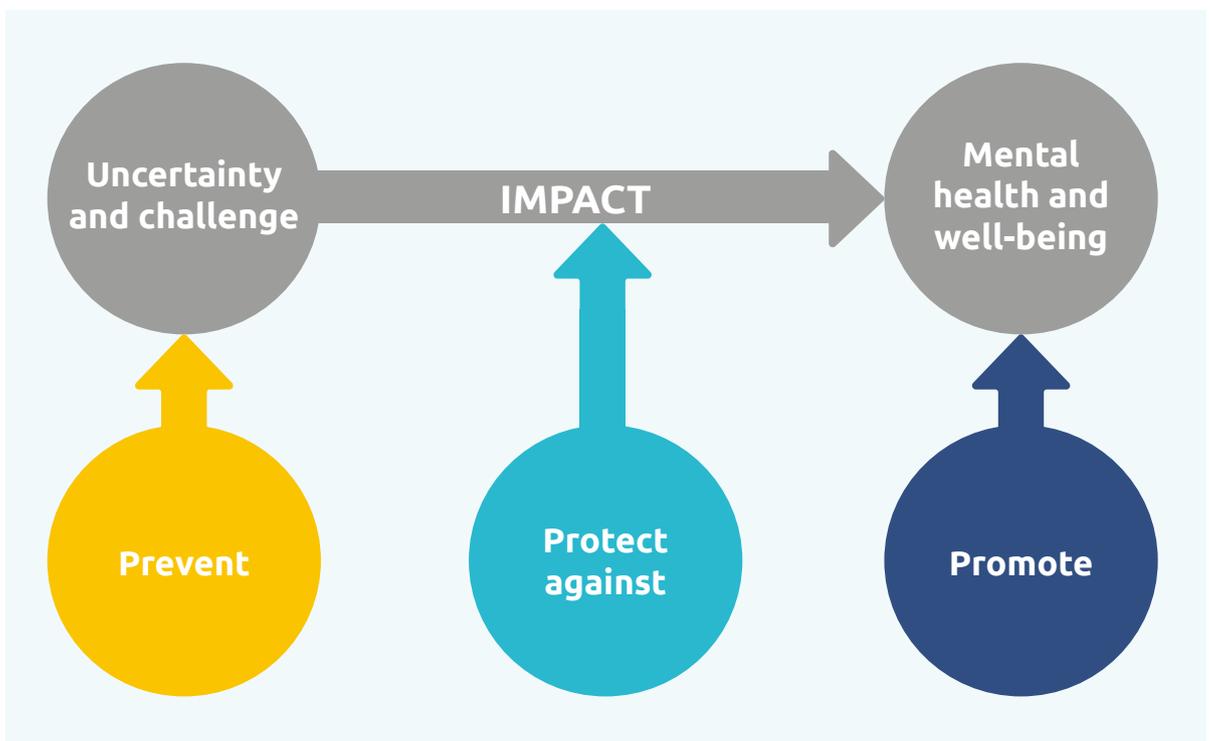
Organisations represented included the Fishermen's Mission, Welsh Fishermen's Association, Menter a Busnes, New Under Ten Fishermen's Association, Welsh Government and Bangor University (see Acknowledgements Table). Thirteen stakeholders contributed through two structured 'World Café' workshops (Bangor [five attendees] and Milford Haven [eight attendees]). Discussions were summarised and shared with attendees for comments to ensure expressed views were captured. The stakeholder discussions and interviews were analysed thematically exploring the challenges faced and the opportunities for action. The quotes included in this report are taken from the two workshops and used to illustrate points and provide context.

2. A framework for preventative action

The benefits of a resilient fishing sector can extend beyond fishermen themselves, contributing towards the health and well-being of rural, coastal communities, local economies, and Welsh culture.

Therefore, improving the mental health and well-being of fishermen and their families is of considerable importance, enhancing the resilience needed to manage and overcome uncertainty. A preventative approach is required that includes: **preventing** uncertainty and the challenges from adversity, **protecting** against the potential impact of those challenges on mental health and well-being, and **promoting** mental health and well-being amongst fishermen and fishing communities to support resilience (Figure 1).

Figure 1: A preventative approach to uncertainty and challenge, and the impact on mental health and well-being



The structure of this report includes a summary of stakeholders' views on the key uncertainties and challenges to maintaining good mental health and well-being in fishing communities and opportunities to **prevent** and **protect** against the impact (see Section 2.1). Followed by solutions to **promote** mental health and well-being, drawing from examples in Wales and the international evidence base (see Section 2.2). Together this information provides the basis for a framework to protect and promote fishermen's mental health and well-being (see Section 3).

2.1. Preventing uncertainty and challenge, and protecting against the impact on mental health and well-being: stakeholder views

The key uncertainties and adverse challenges facing fishermen in Wales identified from the engagement workshops were collated into six themes, described below; alongside the opportunities for action identified by the stakeholders to prevent or protect against the detrimental impact on mental health and well-being.

2.1.1. Key challenge 1: Perceptions of lack of empowerment and sense of control

The attendees at the workshops highlighted stresses that arose primarily from 'modern uncertainties' (37) (e.g. policy, legislation, regulation), rather than from traditional uncertainties that fishermen cope with daily (e.g. unstable income, bad weather, long working hours). Stakeholders reflected how fishermen in Wales are increasingly having to face these 'modern uncertainties' (37), over which they feel a limited control and were perceived as difficult to cope with, both practically and emotionally (e.g. policy decisions, changes in fisheries management and regulations), resulting in a sense of powerlessness and disengagement. This was perceived as impacting on fishermen's health, with key sources of stress including sense of lack of control, and frustration with the level of influence fishermen felt they had over fisheries management.

Stakeholders in both workshops also reflected that there was an overall feeling of disconnect between regulators and fishermen, and expressed frustration over the lack of effective two-way communication process or relationship. Resulting in the fishing community feeling unheard and isolated, and becoming disengaged.

Stakeholders recognised that this was a challenging time for the fishing sector, but were deeply frustrated by a sense of lack of true engagement, or a perception of regulators not working effectively with fishermen to address the challenges and find solutions. Reference to existing organisations that represent possible routes to influence, such as the Welsh Fishermen's Association - Cymdeithas Pysgotwyr Cymru (WFA-CPC)^{vii}, were described, but views differed depending on regions in Wales and fishing specialities (finfish vs shellfish). Commonly, all felt that the previous infrastructure supporting fishermen had been lost, and with it the ability to influence policy development and implementation. Stakeholders felt there was a lack of a collective organisation representing fishermen across Wales, providing a collective voice to inform action and instead there were many small, localised and regional support groups.

Similar challenges have been identified in the wider academic literature, suggesting that fishermen are used to handling 'traditional risks' (37), over which they have a certain level of control and ability to calculate risks (e.g. variable catches, unpredictable weather, fluctuations in income). Evidence suggests that modern uncertainties (37) related to policy tend to lead to anxiety about changes in regulations, and perceived lack of fairness (9), alongside insecurities over management arrangements (22) and insecure employment linked to weak property rights (22). Evidence suggests that both lack of control and powerlessness are primary contributing factors in the decline of subjective well-being (24), and the combination of both, alongside perceived lack of fairness (9,38) can contribute to poor health in fishermen (e.g. depression and anxiety (39)).

^{vii} A national body representing the interests of the Welsh fishing industry. The WFA-CPC brings together five regional associations, and diverse members include inshore static gear fishermen to offshore scallop, trawler and whelk fishermen. The WFA-CPC also links the interests of its members with those of external stakeholders (e.g. Welsh Government, environmental NGOs, universities, and fishery and conservation bodies; see Appendix, Table A1).



Opportunity for action

Engage with fishermen to co-produce policy development and implementation.

Evidence shows that changes in trade agreements, economic policy, and periods of uncertainty can have a detrimental impact on mental well-being (27–31). In such times efforts to reduce uncertainty, where possible, should be intensified (32). Stakeholders identified that there is a significant potential to strengthen partnership and collaborative working with the fishermen to identify solutions, through creating an effective two-way communication process that is adaptive, and takes into account bottom-up driven solutions. From fishermen's perspective, in order to embed a true collaborative working, regulatory bodies need to consider: i) continuously drawing on existing industry-specific knowledge to reflect the industry's changing nature, and ii) value bottom-up driven partnerships, with an emphasis on local knowledge and locally-driven solutions to fisheries management.

In Wales, there are a number of examples of engagement between the regulators and the fishing industry, which can provide an established pathway to build upon. These include (but are not limited to) the Welsh Government working in partnership with fishing industry working groups (e.g. working closely with the WFA-CPC, Welsh Seafood Cluster, Fisheries Local Action Groups [FLAGs], Wales Marine and Fisheries Advisory Group [WMFAG], Wales Action and Advisory Group [WAAG], Seafish Wales Advisory Committee [SWAC], Menter a Busnes, Seafish). Alongside regular engagement with other nations (e.g. Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science [Cefas], Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs [Defra], Food Standard Agency).

An effective, two-way communication process between the regulators and the fishermen on the ground represent opportunities to leverage some of the existing stressors associated with lack of control, and implement solutions which have local relevance and real impact, without eroding existing levels of control or exacerbating further stress associated with the lack of it. Strengthening an effective relationship can be achieved by understanding preferred engagement routes and adapting to enable different regions, fishing sectors, and individuals to contribute effectively.

2.1.2. Key challenge 2: Regulation and administrative burden

The existing administration and regulation related challenges were described by stakeholders as the biggest source of stress amongst fishermen. The regulation of the fishing industry in Wales was described as *'dysfunctional and impacted by over 50 different organisations'*. There was a sense that *'regulation has significantly increased since we joined the common market'*. In addition, stakeholders were concerned about the potential impact of Brexit of exacerbating administrative requirements to ensure a seamless transport of live shellfish.

To provide some context, the management of Welsh fisheries is complex, involving Welsh, UK and EU legislation, and other international agreements for distribution of fish stocks (15). Stakeholders highlighted tensions in the development and application of the EU legislation, namely the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)^{viii} (15), agreed on a UK-wide basis to the Welsh fishing industry. Within this context, the power of Welsh Government is currently limited in its remit, but some of those who attended the workshops were in support of greater power for Wales over some of these issues.

During the workshops, stakeholders shared two examples, one on licensing and one on accessing funds.

Licensing: stakeholders reflected that in order for fishing in Wales to be profitable, fishermen are required to access a range of fish species. Many fisheries in Wales harvest multiple species simultaneously (36). This often translates into needing to obtain individual licences for each type of fishing (e.g. finfish, shellfish) with associated resource-implications (e.g. time and cost), and it is also stock dependent. However, the Welsh fishing fleet is mostly made up of small vessels that, *'catch a little of a lot'*. Stakeholders felt that the application process for licences was implemented with little consideration of individual circumstances, and described as, *'a heartless approach to fishermen'*. Implementation of the legislation must be considered with more empathy, to enable flexibility during difficult periods, such as at times of illness.

Accessing funds: stakeholders reflected on the administrative burden, and complex processes required for accessing funding streams to help cover operational costs and health and safety equipment. Stakeholders reflected that although fishermen are very practically minded individuals, many have relatively low literacy levels (as has been expressed elsewhere (40)). Stakeholders reflected that many of the required skills can be learnt *'on the job'* and *'often in the old days, you would drop out of school, and go straight into the occupation'*, making it more difficult to respond to the increasing administrative demands.

Stakeholders reflected that often the partner/spouse or wife takes on the additional responsibility for the administrative duties, alongside caring for the family and their own employment, placing additional pressures on well-being and the wider family resources. The importance of women and partners as an integral part of the fishing business and the fishing communities, is recognised also in the literature (3,9,40,41): *'The fisherman goes out to the sea and the partner/wife picks up everything else, they take all the stress'*.

^{viii} Aims to manage the fish stocks across EU waters (15). Sets the framework for the Sustainable Fish stock management.



Opportunity for action

Engage with fishermen to develop practical, easily accessible advice and guidance; and streamlined administrative processes for business management functions.

Although it is recognised that funding processes could be more streamlined, it is important to also highlight existing support, which includes Welsh Government officials working closely with FLAGs, WFA-CPC and Fishermen's Mission in order to provide support to fishermen to access funding and assistance with the application processes.

Additional opportunities for action identified from the wider literature include the provision of financial and business management skills training for fishermen and the wider fishing family (e.g. partner/spouse) (39). There are examples of initiatives, at EU-level, such as the 'collaborative spouses' status, which (where available) gives women formal recognition and visibility for their contribution to the fishing business, as well as gives access to social benefits, training and pension rights (42). Frontline support agencies should recognise the importance of the role of partners/spouses in the fishing business and in the management of the regulatory requirements, alongside managing their other roles, and the impact these multiple demands will have on the mental health and well-being of partners/spouses, as well as their families.

2.1.3. Key challenge 3: Sustainability of the fishing industry (supply and demand)

Stakeholders expressed a number of concerns over management and access to stocks, alongside challenges of having to compete for limited resources (e.g. large and small-scale boats fishing within the same territory), overfishing and depletion of stocks caused by lack of regulation enforcement, alongside seasonal variability and frequent changes in the marine environment (e.g. caused by climate change, storms, disease). Stakeholders in North Wales highlighted the need to consider the knock-on effect of climate change on sustainable management of stock, with impacts evident in frequent changes in species distribution, or species disappearing, forcing the fishermen to diversify. Many felt anxious about their ability to adapt and diversify quickly (e.g. equipment, funds, and licences).

Lack of visible enforcement of regulation (fish supply): stakeholders expressed frustration over a perceived lack of visible enforcement of regulations in relation to stock management (e.g. managing fishing quotas or tariffs) and over-fishing. This was perceived as problematic, resulting in lack of trust and the perception that, *'anyone can get out there and start fishing'*. There was a feeling that non-UK boats were over-fishing certain areas, together with a lack of enforcement or management strategy to address, *'Belgian boats [are] coming in and landing three times the quotas they are allowed'*. Findings from the literature suggest that this is further exacerbated by having to compete for limited resources (e.g. the restrictions on fishing for Welsh fleets already create fewer fishing opportunities for small-scale fishermen, and make it difficult to compete with larger fishing vessels (15)).

Opportunity for action

Ensure visible enforcement of regulations that is embedded into the fishing community.

Introducing visible physical presence of enforcement officers on the ground, embedded within and known to the fishing community instead of *'just passing through in their cars'*, was considered by some stakeholders, as a potential solution.

Concerns about access to markets (demand): the additional challenges identified included Brexit, viewed as posing a significant risk to the industry (also recognised elsewhere (15,36)), specifically in relation to uncertainty over demand, and concerns about potential loss of market or inability to deliver due to increase in regulations (e.g. the seamless trading routes). Stakeholders highlighted the Welsh fishing industry is largely dominated by shellfish, which is heavily reliant on an EU export market, creating an overdependence on external trade routes (15). The impact of a disruption to markets and potential financial implications was described as resulting in fishermen worrying about their livelihood.

Stakeholders reflected on Wales' good quality produce and that *'there is a lot of potential to do so much more in this space'*. Internal market infrastructure was felt to be currently lacking, with a need to *'reintroduce seafood on the plate'* in Wales. To address this, Welsh Government has recently created a marketing campaign to promote local Welsh food and the local fishing industry, Port to Plate: aiming to promote #WelshSeafood by increasing public awareness of the quality and diversity of Welsh fish and shellfish, where to buy it, and how to cook it at home. This is aligned with a UK-wide initiative run by Seafish – Love Seafood (43), and the Sea for Yourself campaign funded by Defra (44).

A range of further initiatives have also been put in place by the Welsh Government focusing on promoting Welsh produce nationally and internationally, and include marketing campaigns, horizon scanning activities, coordinating international opportunities to promote Welsh produce (e.g. Expo Cluster, and Expos taking businesses abroad, alongside business development support including identification of potential buyers in key export markets in Europe, Asia, and the USA). There are also programmes offering additional support to fishing businesses in Wales, which include for example trade support, assistance with attending events and international fairs attracting big industry player.

Stakeholders were of the opinion that there was no overarching strategic approach to developing the Welsh fishing industry, resulting in concerns about the strength and visibility of the Welsh industry on a UK and international platform. Stakeholders reflected that this was creating anxiety, stress and financial concerns over potential loss of livelihoods.

Opportunity for action

Identify the most effective routes to champion the interests of the Welsh fishing industry at a UK level, and co-develop a sustainable and secure Welsh fishing sector for future generations.

Stakeholders expressed a need for effective input from the Welsh fishing sector into wider UK and international fisheries management and marine conservation discussions. Stakeholders suggested that the two-way communication between regional associations and those at a national level needed to improve. As an example of good practice, some stakeholders referred to the Association of Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authorities (IFCA^{ix}, a regulatory body in England that aims to champion and lead the creation of sustainable inshore fisheries and actively improve marine management). Stakeholders expressed frustration over no such existing equivalent in Wales, and stressed the opportunities for cross-boundaries learning to inform setting up an alternative suited to Welsh context, and creating an overarching umbrella body to govern regional associations.

Stakeholders highlighted the need for effective policy, legislation and regulation to secure the long-term sustainability of the Welsh fishing industry, reflecting the diversity and changing nature of the marine and coastal environment. Stakeholders suggested the importance of strategically linking fisheries management to the Well-being and Future Generations Act. Thereby linking in with a policy that values the environmental, social, cultural, and economic contribution that the fishing industry can bring to Wales, together with its key role in cultivating marine and coastal environments for the future generations.

Whilst there are some examples including considering Welsh fishing patterns to benefit local coastal communities (15); or consider obtaining full legislative competence for the Welsh offshore zone, currently being negotiated through the proposed UK Fisheries Bill (15). Stakeholders stressed the importance of working with fishermen or fishing sector representatives to enable the development of an appropriate, sustainable, equitable fishing management strategy, and minimise fragmentation of the sector.

^{ix} Association of Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authorities (IFCA) exists in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland and was assisted by Defra in setting up the key governance in place. IFCA consists of regional IFCAs, which are committees or joint committees of the local authorities, tasked with sustainable management of the inshore fisheries in their locality, and usually consist of representatives from a range of sectors, with expertise knowledge in inshore marine areas. IFCA regularly engages with local associations and their members, as well as statutory and non-statutory bodies (www.association-ifca.org.uk)



2.1.4. Key challenge 4: Financial stress

During the workshops, stakeholders described the stresses due to a precarious income, as a result of lack of certainty in stock (overfishing, ability to catch/collect), markets (access, prices and stock fluctuation) and operational costs. Access to markets is largely via EU, and contracted merchant collection or market auction. Stakeholders reflected that prices can vary considerably from market to market; depending on location, type of fishing (e.g. shellfish prices are more stable compared to finfish), and daily EU market prices. This was perceived as posing a significant challenge, and causing financial worries/stress, with fishermen having to, *'take, what they are given'* and stakeholders described the fishing sector as, *'I don't know any other industry where you produce a product, give it to somebody else, and they will tell you how much you will get for it'*.

Evidence from elsewhere supports the view that market access, quotas, tariffs under new Brexit trade agreements are of concern to the Welsh fisheries sector, as are any challenges to supply and demand (16).

Stakeholders reflected that financial instability can leave many fishing families facing financial difficulties, struggling to make ends meet, and often resulting in cutting corners (e.g. not taxing the car, not paying income tax/bills/rent on time, not renewing health and safety equipment), or needing to supplement fishing with additional income streams. This can have a knock-on impact on wider aspects of life (e.g. housing affordability, debt, poverty) (5), particularly in areas where house prices have risen (e.g. locals competing with holiday/second homes) making home ownership unaffordable.

Stakeholders reflected that some financial support is available for business costs including funding schemes to assist with purchasing fishing and health and safety equipment. But the process is complex and lengthy, an example given was the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) which could take nearly a year from application to agreement, rendering it inaccessible. The EMFF has been replaced by Rural Payment Wales (RPW), which offers matched-funding (with an 80:20 ratio), and simplified process through the Standard Cost Scheme. Stakeholders highlighted that the funding application process remains complex and is only online, and that although organisations (e.g. WFA-CPC, Fishermen's Mission) are able to provide fishermen with support with the application process it is still time-consuming.

Additional reflections from stakeholders included lifestyle challenges linked to irregular income, and the *'boom and bust culture'*, which were described as difficult to cope with and typically leading to excessive spending behaviours, or substance misuse.

Opportunity for action

Raise awareness of financial support available, and strengthen business and financial skills.

Stakeholders discussed the need to raise awareness of financial support available to fishing families in Wales and to simplify the process to access it, including monetary support provided all year-round, regardless of seasonal differences. Examples included hardship and welfare funds accessible to fishermen via maritime charities (e.g. Fishermen's Mission), to help cover costs such as grocery shopping or bills payment (see Appendix, Table A1). Additionally, services that provide advice on benefits entitlement and claim processes, alongside debt management, need to be promoted. Suggestions for addressing housing affordability issues for fishermen included providing affordable housing for local fishermen, or creating protected areas to stop holiday/second homes driving local prices up to prevent tourism dispersing fishing communities.

Stakeholders also reflected that to make money from fishing, there is a need to have a business mind-set with entrepreneurial skills, *'there is no in-between existence for fishermen, you are either successful or you are struggling as a fisherman. It's a business at the end of the day. A good business needs a good head on'*. Stakeholders described that fishermen may experience difficulties managing the financial impact of the uncertainty and unstable income, and would benefit from support with financial planning, budgeting, business and financial management to inform their business decisions.

2.1.5. Key challenge 5: Maintaining good health

During the workshops, discussions about health focused on physical health. Both, North and West stakeholders highlighted that maintaining good physical health was seen as essential for a physically demanding job, *'the job is a workout, so they have to look after their physical health and stay physically fit to function in the job'*.

Mental health was less prominent in discussions. When prompted to discuss mental health issues, fishermen were described as *'very resilient'*. However, frontline service representatives did reflect on some of the mental health problems affecting fishermen that they were observing. Financial pressures, irregular and unstable income, changing regulations and lack of control were considered to cause significant stress among fishermen. The *'boom and bust'* income was considered to contribute to excessive health-harming behaviours, including alcohol consumption or drug use. Stakeholders reflected that in the past alcohol misuse was more common, *'[he] would go off to sea, come home, pockets full of money and he [grandfather] would drink it all'* - but in recent years, noticed an increase in drug misuse (e.g. heroin, cocaine), described by stakeholders as becoming 'endemic' to the industry, with significant knock-on impact on the family life. Prescription medication and over the counter painkillers misuse was also described as common, typically initiated from self-medication for health issues, instead of visiting a health care professional (e.g. toothache, back pain).

Stakeholders in West Wales reflected on common barriers to maintaining good health, which included a culture of self-reliance, solitary profession, limited/no time for health – common themes associated with other self-employed professions. Stakeholders described how the unsociable, irregular working hours, in particular for finfish fishermen, provided very little opportunities for the fishermen to prioritise accessing health care; *'if the fishing is good, then you will be out for 16-18 hours'*. This was less of a challenge for shellfish fishermen as the *'pots are in the sea'*, enabling more flexibility around their working day.

During the workshops, barriers to accessing health care services in coastal areas were discussed. These were largely described as linked to general structural issues, rurality (e.g. remote health services, limited access to GP and dental services), and difficulty attracting specialist health professionals into coastal and rural areas. Stakeholders highlighted that maritime charities such as the Seafarers Hospital Society offered a more direct route to accessing health care for seafarers/fishermen (working or retired) and family members (see Appendix, Table A1).

Barriers to accessing mental health services were also discussed by stakeholders. These included long waiting times; limited capacity of mental health services; and structural issues linked to coastal rurality, such as a lack of local available specialist mental health services or professionals. Difficulty accessing mental health services for fishermen was also evident in the evidence review (5).

Opportunity for action

Protect health through health and safety legislation, and extend the narrative to support general health and well-being.

When asked to reflect on potential actions to support health, the focus turned to the practical solution focused on health and safety legislation. When asked to consider potential solutions to health, stakeholders focused on schemes implemented to encourage fishermen to engage with the use of lifejackets, and reflected that this remains a challenge. Common barriers included practicalities (*'they are just uncomfortable to wear'*), the culture of collective mentality (*'it takes one to make the first step, then others will engage'*), the culture of *'manliness'* seen as a weakness to wear one, and the cultural view that fishing was *'men, the sea and the sky becoming one'* – so why is a lifejacket needed? There were also some discussion on whether this was perceived to be an acceptable risk amongst the community: *'what happens if I go overboard? Just open your mouth, take a deep breath, and get it over and done with quickly.'*

Stakeholders suggested that solutions should focus on a health and safety culture shift, and enforcement of the wearing of life jackets. Stakeholders reflected that the implementation and ratification of the International Labour Organization's work in fishing convention (ILO 188) into UK law will help enforce health and safety standards. They recognised this as an opportunity to support the new legislation by promoting some of the existing initiatives (e.g. the 2016 Local Fishermen's Associations in Wales' Welsh Fishing Safety Committee [WFSC]). In order to highlight the importance of fishermen's health and safety, and develop industry-led initiatives that can address the causes of fishing-related loss of life and accidents amongst the Welsh fleet. This initiative is inclusive of all commercial Welsh fishermen, and provides access to online resources to help fishermen to manage health and safety on-board of their vessels or help fund free life jackets.

Stakeholders also suggested that embedding a health narrative which extends beyond the traditional health and safety context, would also help progress towards building a resilient fishing community in the future, as *'the importance of physical health is intrinsic to the fishermen's businesses'*. Other challenges on maintaining health were discussed within the context of supporting health in fishing communities and are outlined in Section 2.2.2.



2.1.6. Summary

Five key challenges facing fishermen and fishing communities in Wales were identified alongside suggested opportunities for action through the stakeholder engagement workshops, summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Five key challenges facing fishermen in Wales and outlined opportunities for action

Uncertainty and challenge	Opportunity for action
1. Perceived lack of empowerment and sense of control related to policy decisions and fisheries management	Engage with fishermen to co-produce policy development and implementation.
2. Regulation and administrative burden	Engage with fishermen to develop practical, easily accessible advice and guidance; and streamlined administrative processes for business management functions.
3. The sustainability of the fishing industry in Wales (both supply and demand)	Ensure visible enforcement of regulations that is embedded into the fishing community. Identify the most effective routes to champion the interests of the Welsh fishing industry at a UK level, and co-develop a sustainable and secure Welsh fishing sector for future generations.
4. Financial stress	Raise awareness of financial support available, and strengthen business and financial skills.
5. Maintaining good health	Protect health through adherence to health and safety legislation, and extend the narrative to support general health and well-being.

Uncertainty around the potential impact of Brexit on the fishing industry in Wales, further exacerbates several of the challenges already impacting fishermen. In particular, stakeholders highlighted their concerns around the uncertainty and viability of fishing as a business and the resulting financial insecurity facing fishermen; alongside a limited control over national policy decisions and fisheries management, all contributing to a feeling of a lack of empowerment and control. Whilst the number of stakeholders at the engagement workshops was low, the issues raised reflect what is seen in the wider national and international literature. The uncertainties and actions identified within the context of Brexit should be considered in conjunction with broader challenges facing the fishing sector in Wales, and the cumulative impact of these on well-being.

2.2. Promoting mental health and well-being

A focus on promoting the mental health and well-being of fishermen and their families is essential to building a resilient fishing sector in Wales, and is aligned to the 'Together for Mental Health' strategy, a cross-governmental strategy to promote mental well-being, and protect and improve the mental health of all people in Wales (45).

Considering the findings from the stakeholder engagement (see Section 2.1.5) and the lack of comprehensive health data for fishermen in Wales, it is difficult to ascertain the breadth of mental health issues/concerns existing in the fishing community; and whether there is an unrecognised need or possibly stigma preventing open discussion about health and well-being. However the small number of mental health studies do report high level of stress (5) and depression (4,5,9) among fishermen, and higher levels of psychological distress compared to the general population (9).

2.2.1. Existing approaches in Wales

Compared to the farming community in Wales where mental health and well-being concerns amongst farmers has increasingly become a visible part of the agenda and supported by farming unions and the agricultural third sector; mental health and well-being has received limited attention among the smaller fishing sector in Wales. The national support available to fishermen tends to be centred on occupational health and safety. Whilst a mental health and well-being narrative was not prominent in discussions, stakeholders did identify a number of bespoke resources for fishermen in Wales which addressed mental health and well-being or financial distress (detrimental to mental well-being). These are summarised below across three general approaches, and full details listed in the Appendix, Table A1. None have been evaluated to understand either uptake by fishermen or impact on their health and well-being.

Mental well-being support for commercial fishermen delivered online or through helplines

There are many maritime charities providing support to fishermen and their families, who are funded through charitable and philanthropic trusts. One of the seafarer's support charities, the Sailor's Society, is contactable through their website, social media, and helplines, and includes a 24/7 Crisis Response Network. The Sailor's Society provides social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual support through their Wellness at Sea programme, that combines class, online chat and e-learning, coaching, dedicated Wellness telephone line for seafarers and their families, free Wellness at Sea mobile app, and peer-to-peer support. Alongside this, mental health and well-being campaigns (Not on My Watch and Are You Missing Something) are run to increase awareness, through a variety of different media (including podcasts, videos, and posters). The classroom-based coaching programme consists of five modules delivered by accredited trainers with maritime experience, delivered over half a day to four days. There is also an e-learning version available.

There are also mental health/emotional support services available online accessible through fishing charities. For example, the Big White Wall is a moderated, interactive online peer-to-peer mental health and well-being service providing access to millions with anxiety, depression and other common mental health issues by offering self-help programmes (short courses), creative outlets and a community that cares. The service can be accessed for free by fishermen and their families through various maritime charities (e.g. Sailors' Children's Society, Seafarers Hospital Society). However, the level of awareness of the service provision amongst the Welsh fishing community is unknown.

Practical and financial support targeted to commercial fishermen and their families

Financial distress is an underlying contributor to poor mental well-being, and was identified as a key challenge amongst fishermen by the stakeholders (see Section 2.1). In the UK, there are over 150 maritime welfare charities that provide practical and financial support of varying kinds targeted to those with maritime occupations (both active and retired); as well as their families, including support to children who have lost a seafaring parent. Some charities provide education, training and welfare for seafarers and other initiatives to improve health and safety for seafarers, for example, addressing the cause of fishing-related loss of life and accidents or through providing a UK-wide radio navigation service.

Some provide philanthropic grants for projects and to maritime welfare charities, for example, the Fishmongers' Company's Charitable Trust supported a project alongside Trinity House and Seafarers UK, to improve access to funding for Welsh small-scale fishermen. Working with the Welsh Government and fishing fleet, the Fishing Amateurs developed a simplified process to enable small scale coastal fishermen in Wales to access European Maritime and Fisheries Funds to improve safety at sea and boost profitability.

Seafarers' Advice and Information Line (SAIL) is a national advice service provided exclusively for current and retired seafarers and their families and dependents. It is run by Greenwich Citizens' Advice Bureaux on behalf of the Seafarers Hospital Society, and can be accessed by phone, email, online, by skype appointment (Skype4SAIL), or through outreach at some seafarers accommodation. Advice is provided by case workers that have specialist experience of issues facing fishermen, for example on benefits, accessing maritime charity grants, specialist debt advice, housing, pension, and relationships. As well as in-depth case work, where they can contact official organisations or charities on behalf of the seafarer.

Outreach services supporting fishermen

Port Chaplains have historically had a presence and undertaken outreach at ports and seafarer's centres, including in Wales, and on ships/boats organised through a number of different organisations. Example includes the Sailor's Society and Stella Maris (The Apostleship of the Sea).

The Fishermen's Mission, provides 24/7 emergency response to families of fishermen alongside longer-term outreach support programmes such as SeaFit. In 2016, the Fishermen's Mission alone responded to 123 accident-related/rescue emergencies and visited 4507 fishing boats (46). The Fishermen's Mission can provide emergency grants for people in need, and access to other grant makers via a helpline, website, and two dedicated port officers in North and South Wales – the Fishermen's Mission Welfare Outreach Programme provides practical and emotional support to fishermen. The Mission also undertakes crisis intervention and personalised practical help project, signposting fishermen towards specialist agencies tackling a variety of welfare issues including debt, alcohol, benefits/employment issues as well as mental health, bereavement and family difficulties. As well as providing welfare centres for UK and foreign fishermen working off the UK's coastline, promoting cohesive communities in our coastal towns, improving communications and inter-personal skills, encouraging friendships and making people more willing to alert staff of issues facing the community.

2.2.2. International and national examples of addressing the mental well-being of fishermen

A number of programmes supporting health among fishermen or workers in the fishing industry were identified from the evidence review. The majority of these were health promotion programmes, and only a few incorporated mental health. Few evidence-based programmes focused especially on supporting fishermen and their families were identified. Whilst for the majority of studies, the impact on health and well-being outcomes was not clear, they provide valuable insights into approaches taken to engage with fishing communities.

Three programmes which considered the impact on outcomes are described below, alongside the reflections from stakeholders on the relevance and transferability to Wales. Further details on the three programmes are found in the Supplementary Material at Public Health Wales, Research and Evaluation.

1. Sustainable Fishing Families (Australia)

The Sustainable Fishing Families (SFF) programme was a pilot developed in Australia by Deakin University, in partnership with the National Centre for Farmers' Health and the Universities of Tasmania and of Exeter, in response to concerns over fishermen's health and well-being, and safety issues (29). The programme was adapted from the well-established Sustainable Farming Families™ programme^x in Australia that recently expanded internationally (45). The SFF consisted of two elements: the first National Fisher Health Survey (NFHS) in Australia of health, safety, and well-being of fishermen; and developing and piloting a targeted, industry-led programme to address the health issues and needs of fishing families.

The SFF programme was targeted to **fishing families** living in Victoria, Australia and took place during 2017-18. It was developed as an outreach health promotion programme; addressing specific needs and health issues of fishermen to promote safer and healthier work practices in order to increase health literacy and encourage health behaviour change to improve physical health and mental well-being, including addressing barriers to uptake (29).

The programme was delivered as three face-to-face workshops that were held at six-month intervals (over a total of four days). The programme comprised of three key core elements (i) health assessment and review (physical health measurements e.g. body mass index (BMI) and respiratory health), (ii) information sharing and group sessions (on 12 health topics relevant to fishermen), and (iii) reflection and taking action (with group feedback) (29). The pilot programme was evaluated amongst the small number of participants (n=7), where it showed 100% retention, and there was a suggestive positive impact on health and well-being (56% change in health behaviour) (29). However, participants were a self-selected group, and the number of recruits was very low and with the absence of a comparison group it is difficult to ascertain an effect.

^x The existing Sustainable Farming Families™ programme has been running since it was first piloted in farming families 2003 in Australia (65). Between 2003 and 2018 the Sustainable Farming Families programme was delivered to over 2500 farmers (65). A previous report discusses the farming programme in context and more detail (33).



Reflections on the transferability to Wales

Stakeholders' consensus was that the SFF programme would not work well in the Welsh context, as any fixed-schedule activities may be difficult to adhere to (e.g. due to the seasonality of the work, irregular working patterns and uncertainty associated with working hours). As, *'if the weather is good, the fishermen would prioritise going fishing'*. Stakeholders also reflected that fishermen have a general distrust of authority, and an informal culture, meaning that formal support approaches do not work well.

However, stakeholders saw great value in any health support being targeted at and extended to include the wider fishing family. Stakeholders recognised that building health messages on existing 'informal' support structures is important, and recognising that the family is a central support system for fishermen. Stresses are typically held closely within the family, affecting all members. Stakeholders highlighted the need to design and extend any health support to the wider fishing family. This would also help remove barriers to accessing support, *'if the delivery can be targeted at family health, this would be a real pull.'* It was reflected that wives/partners/spouses are more likely to access support initially, and if seen as successful, then they encourage fishermen to do so too, *'the wives would drag them along, eventually'* and *'they [fishermen] wouldn't want to be seen as the first going in'*.

2. The Finnmark 'Health and Well-being' Intervention Study (Norway)

The Finnmark Intervention study was a large scale, multi-component, three year^{xi} (46–49) community-based intervention with quasi-experimental design (controlled before and after study with two intervention communities (sample size n=2000) and three matched control communities). The 'Health and Well-being' project was aimed at **fishermen, workers in the fishing industry, and fishing communities**, and took place in Finnmark, Norway during 1988-1991. The project was developed in response to high mortality rates and inequalities in health among fishermen attributed to poor working conditions related to high accident rates and high prevalence of cardiovascular disease (CVD) (46,48). This was part of the Norwegian Government's wider Health and Inequalities in Finnmark programme set up because of high CVD mortality (48).

Different community-based health promotion programmes were applied in the two intervention communities: Nordkapp (Area 1) and Båtsfjord (Area 2) (47). In Area 1, the aim was to change environmental factors influencing health (better working conditions in the fisheries and the fishing industry (e.g. physical, psycho-social, accidents, food habits). In Area 2, it was to influence the whole population to be more health conscious, and to mobilise inhabitants to participate in health-promoting activities (e.g. physical activities, food habits and nutrition, social network, well-being, accidents, and work opportunities).

The project was developed through a theoretical framework of empowerment and co-operation taking a community-based approach, building cross-agency working across the primary health care system, fishing industry stakeholders and third sector organisations (46–48). Area 1 developed and ran courses regarding safety procedures for fishermen, and courses in the working environment for leaders of the fishing industry to establish permanent health care services relevant to the fishing communities' needs.

^{xi} Three-year intervention was planned for both sites, but it was extended to 6+ years in Nordkapp in reaction to a fishing resource crisis.

In Area 2, 200 individuals were involved in formulating objectives and health-promoting strategies to produce two 'manuals' distributed across the community to all schools, many homes, workplaces, and voluntary organisations; followed by health promotion events and information for GPs on behaviour change.

The impact of this controlled before and after study with two intervention communities (sample size n=2000) and three matched control communities; show results that are suggestive of improvements in awareness, lifestyle and cardiovascular risk factors, and mental health variables (46–49).

Reflections on the transferability to Wales

Stakeholders reflected that wider community health promotion approaches may not work very well in Wales. Particularly, as reflected, that there is no such thing as a fishing community anymore, as it has become a highly individualistic and isolated profession with little opportunity to socialise; *'fishermen go out at sea early in the morning, spent the day fishing, come back home and sleep. We don't engage with a lot of people'*. It was also reflected that the dilution and loss of coastal fishing villages and communities have broken up the informal support structures that used to be there. Stakeholders acknowledged that across regions in Wales, fishermen are quite unique in the way they live their lives and this can vary from port to port, and reflects the nature of small-scale fisheries in Wales that works across small harbours, *'there is no common link between communities any more'*. For this reason, wider community health promotion approaches were perceived as difficult to implement in Wales.

Stakeholders discussed that the implementation of any approaches to support fishermen's health would need to be tailored to locality and fishing type (e.g. shellfish/finfish). Since Wales largely consists of small-scale fishing, an approach for Wales would need to be built on local connections and knowledge to address locality-specific issues, and use these connections to raise awareness of the services available.



3. Outreach Health Trainer-led health promotion services in the UK (Bridlington and Seafit Programmes)

a) Bridlington Health Trainer programme (England) – phase 1

In Bridlington Harbour, Yorkshire, a two year pilot (2011-13) for active Health Trainer-led outreach was set up for hard-to-reach fishing communities to support lifestyle change using a behaviour change model (51), and aimed at **fishermen, related workers, and their families**. The project was set up to reduce health inequalities (associated with poor nutrition, diet, weight and lifestyle) and encourage hard-to-reach fishermen to engage with their health. This was in response to data in 2009 that highlighted over 50% of fishermen working out of Bridlington were having health problems associated with poor nutrition, diet, weight and lifestyle (52). The project was initially funded by Seaman's Hospital Society (52). The programme delivered Health Trainer-led lifestyle change support at the harbourside with drop-in health checks (for blood pressure, cholesterol, weight, BMI, and specialist referrals for those identified as at-risk), and one-to-one and group sessions (goal setting and motivation). The programme involved addressing barriers to change; as well as incorporating a series of 'healthy' events (e.g. healthy eating day with healthy breakfast recipes) and competitions (e.g. 'fit2fish' to encourage physical activity).

Evaluation of 165 participants, suggested improvements were made in lifestyle factors and engagement with health (51). However, the numbers are small and there is no comparison group to ascertain the true impact.

Reflections on the transferability to Wales

This approach resonated, as it recognises the real need to go where the fishermen are, and have a continuous presence in the local area. Stakeholders highlighted that the timing of health check delivery is critical, as if most fishermen have gone fishing, they would not turn up for a one-off health check, even if the mobile unit was there in the harbour. Simply, *'if the weather was good, they would have gone fishing'*.

Stakeholders reflected that a mobile outreach model that takes health services to where the fishermen are (e.g. port or harbourside) was considered useful, as long as the service is delivered and targeted appropriately to the specific needs and context of the local fishing community. Stakeholders felt that this would enable fishermen to access health care easily and flexibly to fit health around their working patterns (at their convenience, with immediate treatment/flexible appointments, and without cost). Mobile health check units that have been operating across England were considered an example of good practice, where fishermen are offered an opportunistic health checks for a range of physical health issues (e.g. dental checks, physiotherapy service, optician, mental health and well-being support).

Stakeholders reflected that equally, the focus should be placed upon developing collaborative partnerships between health care providers and the local fishing sector experts and industry bodies (e.g. Fishermen's Mission, WFA-CPC, Menter a Busnes) to bridge the gap, in order to raise awareness of available services and access the fishing community through their networks. Additional strategies can include sharing information via the organisations already providing support, such as GPs, the benefits, or through wives/partners/spouses and advertising services via social media, local radio, newsletter, or printed materials.

b) Seafit programme (UK) – phase 2

The SeaFit Programme (2018-20), was a three-year national, multi-component, mobile health outreach programme, taking free health checks and dental care to **fishermen, related workers and fishing families** to UK fishing harbours and ports. This was funded by the Seafarers UK. The programme was a joined initiative with the Fishermen’s Mission and the Seafarers Hospital Society, aiming to improve health and well-being by reducing barriers to accessing health care by providing alternative models for health care delivery (56). This was carried out through coordinated delivery of mobile health outreach services providing free health checks and dental care (e.g. dentist, optician, physiotherapist, health trainers for health promotion, mental health and well-being support), built on close partnership with local health care providers. Through a variety of mechanisms including: health checks at harbours by NHS Health Check Outreach team; health trainers for healthy lifestyle support (e.g. alcohol, smoking); dental checks and initial treatment; access to mental health and well-being support to complement the Big White Wall online service; physiotherapy service specific to the needs of fishermen; and cancer support.

After two years, the programme visited 12 ports across the UK (England, Northern Ireland, and Scotland)^{xii}, with a total of n=272 fishermen engaged in and completing health checks, suggesting that uptake for services was positive (56).

Reflections on the transferability to Wales

Stakeholders were familiar with some of the SeaFit programme’s activities and saw great value in introducing similar services to Wales. Stakeholders reflected that this was the most accessible and realistic approach for health service delivery for fishermen in Wales, providing that the mobile health outreach can be localised and has a regular consistent presence in the small harbours, to give people opportunity to get used to their presence.

^{xii} We have not found evidence of this being implemented in Wales.

Other initiatives implemented in coastal fishing communities

A number of other health-related multi-sector initiatives targeted specifically to address the health needs of the fishing population were identified, many with good engagement amongst the fishing communities, but failed to examine the impact on health and well-being outcomes. An overview of some of the initiatives are described below and further details provided in the Supplementary Material at Public Health Wales, [Research and Evaluation](#).

UK wide initiatives

- **Fishing specific health outreach programmes across the UK** tackling health inequalities with flexible health service delivery (e.g. mobile outreach). Examples include The Fish Well (47–49) initiative of Norfolk County Council’s Public Health and Occupational Health department, in partnership with Fishermen’s Mission and the Health Trainer Service, providing free NHS health checks (heart checks) to fishermen to help reduce risk of CVD; and the Living Longer initiative (50) run by NHS England and Public Health England to deliver NHS health checks aimed at fishermen in Cornwall to reduce premature CVD mortality, delivered at Fisherman’s Mission premises by a men’s outreach health promotion officer. Four critical factors contributed to the success of the Living Longer initiative, and included i) commissioning a provider with good understanding of health inequalities; ii) identifying key fishing industry organisation to enable engagement with the fishing community; iii) identifying appropriate venues located within the fishing community; iv) use of social marketing techniques to engage with the target group; and vi) engagement of public health and the local authority (50).
- **National online mental health support services** open to UK-based fishermen and their families offering mental health advice, and well-being service, provided by The Big White Wall (launched in 2016) (51), funded by the Seafarers UK; a free online 24/7 portal for mental health and well-being support, offering one-to-one therapy alongside self-help resources and access to a wider support network.
- **Men’s Health Forum**, in partnership with Seafarers Hospital Society jointly developed the first Fishermen’s Health Manual (published in 2012, revised in 2014), funded by Maritime Charities Group, written in a plain language, as an easy to use guide containing practical advice for men’s health at sea, port and at home, using humour to address potentially embarrassing topics (52).
- **Mental health campaigns across the UK**, Seafarers Society with the Fishermen’s Mission has held national campaigns aimed at promoting fishermen’s mental health, such as – Having a tough time? to tackle stigma and raise awareness about mental health (53), and social media campaigns aimed at physical health promotion, such as Smile Together (est. 2019) and #SmileatSea (est. 2019) for free dental care checks (11).



International initiatives (Australia, Tasmania)

- **Fishing specific mental health helplines and campaigns** include the R u okay? (est. 2018) (54) mental health campaign aimed to raise awareness of mental health issues and recognise early signs of poor mental health amongst fishermen in Australia, driven by the Seafood Industry Australia; and Talk to a mate helpline as part of the Rural, Alive and Well (RAW) programme (55), an outreach support programme for rural Tasmania, providing 24/7 support for physical and emotional well-being, alongside mental health and a strong focus on suicide prevention (56).
- The **Stay Afloat** (est. 2018) mental health campaign (56) brings together in partnership the RAW programme, Well Tasmania, and Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council to raise awareness of mental health issues, tackle stigma and promote support available amongst the fishing communities (56). The programme includes a peer-to-peer element, encouraging those within the industry to support each other (56). Also, Project Regard (est. 2018) (57), an initiative of Women in Seafood Australasia (WISA) aiming to open the discussion about poor mental health amongst the fishing communities in Australia, and speaking openly about their personal struggles with mental health (57). To counter stigma, as the next stage, the initiative aims to recruit fishing industry ambassadors to help raise awareness among fishermen about poor mental health (58).
- **Community-driven approaches, delivered in partnership with health providers, welfare groups and fishing industry bodies** that focus on delivering community-based health and well-being strategies, utilising ‘soft entry points’ (e.g. involving key respected community members), and delivered informally. Developing partnership with the fishing welfare groups who have an established relationship with the fishing community is important to enable health services to access the community and target services to their specific needs (3). Examples include organising community health promotion through activities that bring the community and families together around common values (e.g. a beach clean-up day) (3).

2.2.3. Key reflections from stakeholders

Key reflections from the stakeholders within the context of these programmes are highlighted below and provide valuable insights to help inform action to supporting the health and mental well-being of fishermen in Wales.

Engage and support informal routes to accessing support, including peers and front line staff

The first was the need for informal approaches, developed and tailored locally, implemented around the local fishing industry (e.g. shellfish/finfish) to enable engagement. Stakeholders reflected that despite the difficulties fishermen generally experience in accessing formal mental health services, fishermen are seen to compensate for this by approaching frontline staff working in ports and harbours, and known to the fishing community. The informal nature of discussions with trusted individuals is a more comfortable way for fishermen to reach out for support and specifically to offload or discuss any concerns or stresses they may have.

When asked to reflect on existing models of support, stakeholders reflected that peer support networks do exist to some degree, but are often discreet and informal. The fishing community culture is one of high self-reliance and having to promote support systems is seen negatively. An example of an attempt to promote peer support was the Champions Network (an informal peer network), and lessons learned from this suggested that peer support networks could only work if they operate discreetly and informally (e.g. cannot be made obvious or too official), and 'champions' need to be trusted and respected members of the fishing community such as the wives/partners/spouses of the fishermen, who are either already well-respected within the community or involved in provision of support. The fishing merchant was also identified as someone who has regular and influential engagement with the fishermen, therefore an entry point to engaging with fishermen for any support initiative.

Connectivity with locality-specific issues was described as important to raise awareness of the services available and to develop collaborative partnerships between health care providers and the local fishing sector experts and industry bodies (e.g. Fishermen's Mission, WFA-CPC, Menter a Busnes).

Mobile health outreach services implemented with strong local connectivity were considered to be of potential value

Mobile outreach was seen as being of value given its accessibility, providing delivery is localised and has a regular consistent presence in the small harbours, to give people opportunity to get used to their presence and engage. It was discussed that the key for effective delivery is ensuring that the mobile van unit goes from port to port (reflecting the dispersed and small-scale nature of fishing communities in Wales) and incorporating health service delivery that fits around the fishing working life and culture. Stakeholders highlighted that for mobile health outreach to be successful, persistence over time and regular presence (e.g. weekly/monthly) were outlined as key elements for success (rather than a one-off visit), as it can give people a chance to get used to the new services being there, build trust and relationships with the community, and increase attendance over time, *'even though, you will start with no one for few months, persistence and regular presence is key'*. Stakeholders reflected that in order to get fishermen to attend any mobile health check, a more informal approach needs to be used (e.g. drop-in).

Incorporate an informal mental health narrative through a physical health check

Health checks that were considered attractive to fishermen in Wales and a good *'draw in'* included: free dental checks, blood pressure checks, and osteopathy services. Stakeholders highlighted that mobile health outreach services providing free physical health checks in fishing communities may also present a good opportunity to routinely introduce an informal conversation on mental health and well-being. This was considered a good way to engage with fishermen on discreet, sensitive topics, as well as normalise help-seeking behaviours and reduce barriers. In order to *'draw people in'*, the health checks offered need to be appropriately targeted to meet local health needs and be targeted to the wider fishing family, as well as fishermen.

Raise awareness of existing tailored mental well-being and support services available to the fishing sector

Stakeholders discussed the need to create a safe and discreet space to enable more open and normalised conversations about mental health and well-being, as well as to increase the awareness of the available support and to address barriers to help-seeking. Recognising the cultural norms, the value of existing social relationships and the collective mentality of fishing communities is key for introducing any mental health initiatives, or improving access to services. Stakeholders highlighted that it is often the spouse/partner encouraging fishermen to seek help/health care, or speaking openly about stresses and health issues facing the fishing community. Women in the industry were perceived as trusted, respected members of the community that men are more likely to open up to; who have direct knowledge of the fishing sector, as often are an integral part of the fishing business. Similar findings are reported in the literature, recognising that women in fishing communities play a key role in terms of provision of support and health advocacy, and are particularly integral to the promotion of good health and well-being for fishermen (3,9). This role enables them (women) to recognise any health/mental health issues facing the industry as well as identify effective strategies for addressing them (3,37). Stakeholders who attended the workshops reflected that involving women already working in the industry in either raising awareness of mental health services or in the delivery of mental health intervention was described as beneficial.

2.2.4. Summary

Mitigating the impact of key challenges facing the fishing sector and promoting the mental health and well-being of fishermen and their families is essential to building a resilient fishing sector in Wales. The examples from the international evidence highlight the growing effort of many countries to start better supporting the mental well-being of the fishing communities. A key challenge is the lack of robust, evidence-based studies that demonstrate impact on outcomes; or examine mental well-being as an outcome; and a lack of specifically designed programmes to support the mental well-being of fishermen and their families.

In this report, three programmes were identified which had a strong rationale, and sound theoretical approach, and were developed or implemented in partnership between the fishing industry, welfare agencies and the health sector/health provider. Most programmes demonstrated high levels of engagement amongst fishing communities (largely through the links with fishing partners, peer support, and community empowerment) and a change in knowledge and awareness of mental health. However, none demonstrated a significant improvement in fishermen's mental well-being as an outcome. Additional limitations include the short length of follow up and the small number of participants and a lack of comparator groups in most studies.

Amongst the stakeholders, there was a consensus that traditional health services or any fixed delivery model would not work well in a Welsh context, due to the fishermen's irregular working patterns and seasonal variability of their work. Wider health promotion approaches were perceived as difficult to implement, due to Wales consisting of many unique small fishing ports, whose way of life can vary from port to port. Any approaches implemented to support health would need to be place-based, tailored to locality and fishing type, and be built upon local connection and knowledge in order to address locality-specific issues and health needs. This includes a good understanding of the fishing culture (e.g. discreet and informal approach); delivery plan including a pre-engagement period, which will need to focus on building trust, visibility and respect among the local communities first; and building upon existing local networks, which include establishing partnerships with trusted industry experts, welfare groups, and local health providers. The approach that particularly resonated included a mobile health outreach that takes health services to where fishermen already are (to harbours and ports across Wales).

Across the programmes implemented within fishing communities, it was evident that there are common factors which likely support good engagement across the fishing sector, and should be used to inform future action.

These included:

- Ensuring co-production in the development of any interventions and robust engagement with fishermen and fishing industry experts in Wales.
- Improving access to free health care via a flexible delivery, compatible with fishermen's working patterns and delivered by trusted local providers, in a familiar context.
- Establishing partnerships with local health care providers/services, building on existing networks, local connections and knowledge (e.g. partnership with local industry experts; welfare groups) to engage with and access fishing communities.
- Expanding health service provision to target wider fishing family.
- Introducing approaches that are locality-specific and target local health needs and delivered informally.
- Investing in 'having a continuous regular presence as a service' and building trust with the community.

3. Conclusion and recommendations for action

A framework to support the mental health and well-being of fishermen and their families at times of uncertainty needs a preventative approach (see Figure 1) which includes a focus on:

- **Preventing** uncertainty and the challenges from adversity
- **Protecting** against the potential impact of those challenges on mental health and well-being
- **Promoting** mental health and well-being amongst fishermen and fishing communities to support resilience

Drawing on the stakeholder engagement and the evidence review, this section outlines key recommendations under the 'prevent, protect, promote' themes. The series of recommendations outlined below are built upon key actions/solutions identified by the stakeholders, detailed in Sections 2.1 and 2.2.

A. Preventing uncertainty and challenge from adversity, and protecting against the impact on mental health and well-being (see Section 2.1)

Recommendation: Develop and implement a national, strategic vision for a sustainable Welsh fishing industry, co-produced with the fishing community and promoted locally, nationally, and internationally.

Stakeholders identified that changes in fisheries management, regulations and financial concerns represent considerable sources of stress and anxiety; and are one of the biggest challenges to the mental well-being of fishermen. In 2018, the Wales Centre for Public Policy report highlighted that although there may be opportunities for Wales post-Brexit, such as an improved share of fishing opportunities, targeted changes in fisheries management may be required to ensure benefits to Welsh ports and wider coastal communities (36). In the recent Brexit and our Seas Consultation, Welsh Government outlined their ambition for a sustainable fishing sector alongside a commitment to proactively engage with the fishing sector to co-produce and shape the future vision for Welsh fisheries (15) and given the uncertainty facing the fishing industry in Wales, and reflections from stakeholders in this programme, this remains a key priority.

The existing supportive legislative framework (Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015)) (15) also represents an opportunity to demonstrate the fishing sector's contribution to the health and well-being of the population in Wales, and in particular coastal communities (15). The Welsh National Marine plan (WNMP) (15) states that it aims to ensure sustainable growth for the fishing industry in Wales and wider benefits to the coastal communities (15), ensuring a healthy marine environment, and stable, diverse and profitable fishing industry for future generations (15). The value of this was reaffirmed by the fishing stakeholders at the workshops.

Recommendation: Identify the most effective routes to champion the interests of the Welsh fishing industry at a UK and international level, and increase the visibility of those actions.

There was a sense amongst the stakeholders that the Welsh fishing industry did not have strong representation nationally and internationally, resulting in sense of vulnerability, lack of empowerment, and frustrations in the communication and engagement with regional associations across Wales. Within the current context, proactively supporting the public image of the fishing industry in Wales, promoting the value of Welsh seafood produce and the cultural, environmental, social contributions that fishing as an industry brings to Wales and its coastal communities – was seen as important to sustaining the fishing sector. This was alongside establishing more profitable domestic markets and strengthening access to wider international markets. As the UK leaves the EU, ensuring an approach to fisheries management that supports the diverse fishing sector in Wales is important to ensure a sustainable and resilient fishing industry for the future.

Recommendation: Protect against the impact on well-being through improved provision of financial advice and business support for fishermen and the wider fishing family.

Good financial management and planning could help mitigate the impact of associated financial stresses on mental well-being. A range of support exists in Wales, such as hardship and welfare funds, alongside debt management support and benefits advice, but there is a need to raise awareness amongst fishermen. The complexity of the process was seen as a barrier to individuals accessing support and/or funding, so the simplification of administrative processes would be beneficial.

Stakeholders described that fishermen may experience difficulties with managing the financial impact of the uncertainty and unstable income, and would benefit from support with financial planning, budgeting, business and financial management to inform their business decisions. Currently, financial support is also accessible via the EMFF, which offers support for: developing fisheries businesses (advisory services, partnerships and information sharing; diversifications; innovation in fisheries; improving shore-based facilities); and investments on board fishing vessels (gear and equipment; added value, product quality and use of unwanted catches; health and safety; and improving the energy efficiency of fishing vessels). Access to training or business support should be considered to be extended to family members (e.g. spouses/partners), who are often part of the business, addressing administrative, and regulatory requirements, alongside often managing the accounts. This can be built upon the existing provision in Wales, such as the Seafood Training Network Wales, provided by Seafish (59), which already assess fish and shellfish businesses for training needs and skills development, with training delivered by approved training providers, and also encourages through education new entrants into the industry (59).

Recommendation: Protect against the impact on well-being by encouraging visible enforcement of regulation.

Transparent enforcement of regulations is required to ensure better management of stock and protect the resources available to Welsh fishermen. This also means that enforcing any existing regulations will need to be adequately resourced, with a visible presence on the ground of enforcement staff at all fisheries/ports in order to ensure regulatory compliance.

B. Maintaining physical health and **promoting** mental health and well-being amongst fishermen and the fishing communities (see Section 2.2)

The engagement workshops highlighted some regional differences in perceptions about the health of fishermen across Wales, particularly in attention paid to mental health and prioritising work over health, but there were also commonalities that focused on the importance of maintaining good physical health to cope with a physically demanding job. Although these illustrate the complexities of health attitudes affecting fishermen in Wales, they also offer insights and potential solutions. It is clear from this report that any initiatives targeting health, need to recognise that fishermen are a diverse group and that their health concerns can differ based on key characteristics such as fishing patterns (type of fishing) and working roles (60).

Many of Welsh fishing and coastal communities are dispersed and remote, and differences in regional socio-economic context (e.g. poor infrastructure, connectivity, lack of specialist health services, demographics) can act as important health and social equity drivers (35). As reflected in Section 2.2, to be effective in Wales, any health promotion approaches need to consider that Welsh fishing communities tend to consist of unique small-scale fishing localities. In order to help inform the development and implementation of targeted health approaches, it is important to recognise the wider context in which the fishing communities exist and function. To do that, any intervention would need to be co-produced with the engagement of local fishermen to ensure they are tailored to the specific local health needs. This can be achieved by building upon local connections and knowledge to address locality-specific issues and help raise awareness about the services amongst the community.

Increasing our understanding of the current health profile of the fishing communities in Wales is critical to enable us to understand better their specific health and mental health needs, patterns of use and uptake of health services, and other existing support provision, barriers to uptake and how best to address these.

Through the evidence review and stakeholder reflections on the transferability of different approaches to Wales, the recommendations for action are outlined below;

Recommendation: Promote well-being through improved access to health care via a flexible delivery model built in partnership with local providers and networks.

Several barriers to accessing health care were described by the stakeholders (see Section 2.2), including the difficulties faced by Welsh fishermen in attending traditionally-delivered health services; due to incompatibility with working patterns and unpredictable nature of the job. To enable fishermen to access health care more easily, a flexible outreach model of delivery was proposed (e.g. a mobile outreach), as this can fit around fishing working life and culture. Several key elements need to be considered for its implementation: i) health services should be place-based; ii) local, provided across ports and harbours; iii) delivered in partnership with trusted local providers (e.g. Fishermen's Mission), iv) delivered regularly; v) offer flexible appointments (e.g. drop-ins, appointment reminder service by SMS, flexibility to rebook missed appointments) (2); vi) delivered informally; and most importantly, vii) tailored to local health needs of the fishing community. Evidence from evaluated studies indicate that mobile health checks work best where immediate treatment or further specialist referral are offered on the day (61).

The delivery model should take into consideration key findings from this report on how health services need to be delivered to ensure successful uptake. This includes a good understanding of the fishing culture (e.g. discreet and informal approach); delivery plan including a pre-engagement period, which will need to focus on building trust, visibility and respect among the local communities first; and building upon existing local networks, which include establishing partnerships with trusted industry experts, welfare groups, and local health providers (see Section 2.2.2). Trusted members of the fishing community (described as *'soft entry points'*) are an important asset to help raise awareness about services available or to introduce new initiatives. This includes women but also others who are respected in the community, such as skippers or merchants. In addition, evidence from evaluated studies of implemented programmes also highlighted the need for a variable model of support provision (including 1:1 and group support); and ensuring delivery staff are recruited locally, have personal qualities and abilities to be empathetic, non-judgemental and take a practical approach (2).

There are a few existing examples of approaches implemented in the UK that could be adapted for Wales that demonstrate successful engagement from the fishing community. As an example, the Seafit programme (56) was described by stakeholders as *'could be very beneficial'* for Wales (see Section 2.2.2). Building on close local partnerships is at the heart of the Seafit approach (61) and the delivery includes a wide range of physical and mental health support.

The provision of physical health checks can present a good opportunity to also routinely include mental health brief intervention – this would help to normalise mental health and better understand and address barriers to help-seeking for mental health issues (e.g. stigma). This should include mental health support for the issues facing fishermen in Wales that were highlighted at the stakeholders' engagement workshops (i.e. loneliness and isolation, stress, anxiety, alcohol and substance misuse), and offer support delivered regularly in partnerships with local well-being services. Including referrals to non-clinical issues, such as welfare or housing into health check provision (62), may also be beneficial.

Recommendation: Raise awareness of health and well-being support through multi-agency partnerships including local health care providers, welfare agencies and industry experts; in order to build on local networks and knowledge, and engage with and access fishing communities.

Evidence from existing UK programmes stressed the importance of the collaborative partnerships between public health, third sector, and the fishing industry; and highlight the need for cross-agency working. It is clear from the findings from the stakeholder engagement that establishing cross-sectoral partnership to deliver targeted health initiatives to local fishermen is necessary, if not critical to success. Utilising local connections, and involving local industry expert contacts is necessary to help raise awareness of the services available, and access the fishing community. As evidence shows, fishermen are more likely to access health services which are delivered by recommended and trusted providers (61).

The current level of awareness amongst the fishermen and frontline staff of existing support services for fishermen seemed limited, with services dispersed or more often represented by regionally focused initiatives. There is also a lack of a single portal or point of contact where fishermen and fishing families can be informed of and connect with the services they need for affordable and accessible advice and to help them make ends meet, provide extra comforts, and/or cope with crisis (40). Creating a centralised directory of support services, with clear regional provision and type of support available to Welsh fishermen and their families, mapped out across Wales – would be of great benefit. This can include mental health, physical health, financial support and planning; debt management, business support and training; succession planning and wider. This could be achieved by conducting a mapping exercise of existing mental health and well-being services and current sources of support. This would help us to understand the uptake and success of existing services, demonstrate need, and help to inform development and expansion of services. This can be built upon examples and similar initiative implemented amongst the farming community in Wales, such as FarmWell^{xiii}, a recently launched website that acts as a one-stop resource to help to support the farming business, and the farming community with provision of information, support services available.

^{xiii} www.farmwell.org.uk



Recommendation: Promote well-being by extending support to include fishermen and the wider fishing family.

Stakeholders identified good health as a vital asset for fishermen to be able to undertake a physically demanding job. Although most existing research focuses on the health of fishermen themselves, stakeholders highlighted that the health concerns and risks extend to the wider fishing families, who are equally as affected by the health risks linked to fishing as a lifestyle (35). Health support should extend to the wider fishing family (35), and targeting 'family health' can have a positive spill-over effect to the fishermen. Evidence suggests that the majority of health initiative tends to only target fishermen (males), in a particular age group (e.g. typically 40 years old and above); leaving a significant gap in engaging females (spouses/family members) and younger fishermen.

Recommendation: Increase our understanding of health needs amongst fishermen and their communities to inform action.

There is a lack of understanding of the health, and in particular mental health needs of fishermen and fishing communities in Wales. Stakeholders' engagement revealed a stronger emphasis on physical health and health and safety, with less attention paid to mental health. It is difficult to ascertain from the findings whether mental health is less of a concern for the fishing community, or whether there is in fact, an unrecognised need, or possibly a stigma attached to mental health. Similar discrepancies are also reflected in the literature. A survey by Seafarers UK, showed that 95% of UK fishermen surveyed reported suffering from stress (5); as well as poor mental health (5,22,35), and depression (4,5,9). Stakeholders at the engagement workshops also highlighted the mental health needs/concerns that tend to be observed by front line staff from their regular contact with the community.

There is little evidence for established, formal pathways for mental health support tailored specifically for fishermen in Wales, however, stakeholders reflected on existing informal sources of support that fishermen draw on for mental health and well-being. Stakeholders discussed that, to a degree, informal support systems (e.g. peer-support network) do exist amongst fishing communities. Success depends on being delivered discreetly and informally, by a trusted or respected member of the community, particularly women. Increasing our understanding of the breadth of mental health issues and concerns among fishing communities, and existing support provision in Wales is needed.



Recommendation: Considering promoting mental health awareness amongst fishermen and organisations working with fishermen.

The informal routes to support through peers and support agencies was highlighted as of key importance amongst the stakeholders. This presents an opportunity to support the mental health awareness of frontline^{xiv} staff who have regular contact with the fishermen/fishing communities and who recognise the impact of the pressures of the current system first hand. Staff in organisations which work with fishermen often encounter fishermen in distress but lack skills and confidence to know how to manage these situations. This could be achieved by, for example, introducing Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training to frontline staff to increase capacity and knowledge in recognising mental health problems and confidence to act^{xv}. However, it remains important to ensure such approach is evaluated appropriately to understand the impact on the recipients of the intervention (i.e. their knowledge and attitudes towards mental health issues), alongside the effect on knowledge of those delivering the intervention (63). Evaluation can include looking at mental health and well-being outcomes of recipients; mental health service usage (e.g. uptake, referrals to health professionals, costs of service usage; delays or waiting times in receiving treatment), but can also consider the overall cost-effectiveness of providing MHFA intervention (63).

^{xiv} Stakeholders referred to frontline staff from organisations such as Welsh Fishermen's Association, Menter a Busnes, regional FLAGs, Seafish, and fishing merchants (see Appendix, Table A1).

^{xv} MHFA is an example of an intervention for mental health literacy that focuses on recognising mental health conditions, increasing knowledge on how good mental health can be maintained, and recommending actions to help support or prevent poor/or further deterioration of mental health (66). Reviews of the literature concluded that there is some evidence MHFA training has led to an improvement in knowledge, understanding and stigma among those trained (67), but the longevity of any improvements are unclear (68,69). A Cochrane systematic review of MHFA looking at the impact of the programme on outcomes amongst those receiving it, across a range of settings is currently under way (63). Implementation should consider carefully the benefits and the costs of such approaches, and ensure that it includes supporting infrastructure to do so. The provision of MHFA has been widely implemented within the farming sector (e.g. Farm-Link (70) in New Zealand), and also successfully implemented amongst the farming communities in Wales, with examples from the DPJ Foundation's approach (33) delivering MHFA to the farming community, as well as front line agencies and industry experts. The benefits of this approach include creating a common language across key agencies, and a shared platform for talking about mental health and well-being (33). Learnings from the implementation of the MHFA in the farming sector can be transferable to the fishing sector, and indicate that employing trusted and respected community members in the delivery of the training, who have good understanding of the culture, and experience and knowledge of the industry-are all important factors to ensure a successful implementation (33).



Conclusion

This report is a collaboration between Public Health Wales and the Mental Health Foundation, informed by the international evidence base, and views from across the fishing sector in Wales, including fishermen themselves. It is an attempt to address a key area of public health concern, where there is both a need and a demand for action, but a relative lack of clear evidence.

The findings demonstrate that whilst Brexit brings considerable uncertainty and challenge to the fishing sector, many underlying causes of anxiety amongst fishermen are longstanding. Views from the stakeholders and the international evidence support the need for a preventative approach which includes action to prevent the uncertainty and challenge from adversity, protect against the potential impact on mental health and well-being, and promote mental health and well-being amongst fishing communities in the longer term – to support a resilient fishing sector for the future.

When considering how to best promote mental health and well-being amongst fishermen, only a small number of programmes had been evaluated to some extent, but these were largely small pilot studies and did not adequately examine the primary outcome – mental health and well-being amongst fishermen. Whilst we recognise that given the time available we may not have identified all studies in this area, there is insufficient evidence to conclude on a single effective programme to support mental health and well-being amongst fishermen. However, there are transferable lessons to inform the implementation of a range of approaches targeted to addressing mental health and well-being amongst fishing communities in Wales. Co-production and evaluation should be at the heart of any implementation, and the opportunity exists for Wales to be an innovator in this area.

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Appendix

Table A1: Overview of key organisations and support available for the fisheries sector in Wales
(information available as of March 2020)

Services	Support	Geography	Funding	Website
Well-being support for commercial fishermen and families				
The Fishermen's Mission	Provides emergency support alongside practical, financial, spiritual and emotional care to all fishermen, active or retired, and their families. The Mission can provide emergency grants for people in need, and access to other grant makers via a helpline, website, and two dedicated port officers in North and South Wales. The Mission includes: the Fishermen's Mission Welfare Outreach Programme providing practical and emotional support to fishermen. The Mission also undertakes crisis intervention and personalised practical help project, signposting fishermen towards specialist agencies tackling a variety of welfare issues including debt, alcohol, benefits/employment issues as well as mental health, bereavement and family difficulties. As well as providing warm and safe welfare centres for UK and foreign fishermen working off the UK's coastline promoting cohesive communities in our coastal towns, improving communications and inter-personal skills, encouraging friendships and making people more willing to alert staff of issues facing the community.	National (UK)	Charity/ third sector; supported by The Fishmongers' Company's Charitable Trust (FCCT)	https://www.fishermensmission.org.uk
Seafarers UK	Support seafarers safety and welfare throughout their career: from first considering a career at sea, to working at sea, managing relationships at home while adapting to a seagoing life, then coming ashore and during retirement. This is done by giving grants to organisations and projects that make a real difference to people's lives, across the Merchant Navy, Fishing Fleets, Royal Navy and Royal Marines. In 2019, 53 grants were awarded totalling £2.2m to 43 maritime welfare charities.	National (UK)	Charity/ third sector	https://www.seafarers.uk

Services	Support	Geography	Funding	Website
Sailor's Society	Christian-based Seafarers support charity, contactable through website, seafarer's centres/port chaplains, social media, helpline and well-being e-learning/coaching programme <i>Wellness at Sea</i> – providing practical, emotional, spiritual and well-being (mental health) support, includes a 24/7 crisis response network, and well-being campaigns.	Global, including UK and Wales	Charity/ third sector	https://www.sailors-society.org https://wellnessatsea.org
Welsh Fishing Safety Committee (WFSC)	Local Fishermen's Associations in Wales have formed a Welsh Fishing Safety Committee to highlight the importance of fishermen's health and safety and develop industry-led initiatives and projects that address the most significant causes of fishing-related loss of life and accidents amongst the Welsh fleet.	Wales		https://www.seafish.org/article/welsh-fishing-safety-committee https://www.facebook.com/Wales-Fishing-Safety-1529611883816139
Royal Liverpool Orphan Society Institution UK	Independent grant-giving organisation helping those families who have lost a seafaring parent. The Institution supports families by providing grants for the children throughout their education.	National (UK)	Charity/ third sector	http://www.rlsoi-uk.org/Home.html
The Shipwrecked Fishermen and Mariners' Royal Benevolent Society (Shipwreck Mariners)	Financial help to merchant seafarers, fishermen and their dependants who are in need. It pays an immediate grant to the widow of a serving seafarer who dies, whether death occurs at sea or ashore. They operate through a national volunteer network of 200 Honorary Agents.	National (UK)	Charity/ third sector supported by Trinity House	www.shipwreckedmariners.org.uk
Sailors' Children's Society	Family support scheme working in partnership with Togetherall, providing financial assistance, emotional and practical support.		Charity/ third sector supported via donations, legacies, local fundraising events, trusts and grants such as Seafarers UK, Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity and Trinity House	www.sailorschildren.org.uk
Fishermen's Welfare Alliance	Health, safety and welfare issues of the fishing industry.	National (UK)	Charity/third sector	http://www.fishermenswelfare.net

Services	Support	Geography	Funding	Website
<p>The Fishmongers' Company's Charitable Trust (FCCT)</p>	<p>Livery Companies of the City of London – philanthropic and grants through contribution to the UK fishing sector and other non-fishery areas; supports a wide range of organisations and charities, particularly across the field of education, all of which are working to help people improve their lives for the long term. Projects supported have included Improving access to funding for Welsh small-scale fishermen where working with the Welsh Government and fishing fleet, the Fishing Amateurs (funded by The Fishmongers' Company alongside Trinity House and Seafarers UK) have developed a simplified process to enable small scale coastal fishermen in Wales to access European Maritime and Fisheries Funds to improve safety at sea and boost profitability.</p> <p>Additionally, The Fishmongers' Company has a long-running relationship with the Fishermen's Mission, who for almost 140 years have provided practical and pastoral support for active and retired fishermen. As part of the Fish & Fisheries grants programme, the Company's Fisheries Charitable Trust has provided financial support for the Fishermen's Mission Welfare Outreach Programme which takes a holistic approach tackling issues around social exclusion, access to financial support and primary health care as well as emergency support following on-board accidents and incidents at sea.</p> <p>As well as providing emotional support the UK wide programme has facilitated 611 emergency grants from various organisations in the last year, helping fishermen cope with financial crises which could result in homelessness or County Court Judgements.</p>	<p>National (UK)</p>		<p>https://fishmongers.org.uk/fish-fisheries</p>

Services	Support	Geography	Funding	Website
Trinity House	Safeguarding shipping and seafarers, providing education, support and welfare to the seafaring community with a statutory duty as a General Lighthouse Authority to deliver reliable, efficient and cost-effective aids to navigation service for the benefit and safety of all mariners (enabling mariners to locate their positions to within 5-10 metres through our Differential GPS radio navigation service. The service operates around the clock, every day of the year and in all weather conditions). The UK's largest-endowed maritime charity, the General Lighthouse Authority (GLA) for England, Wales, the Channel Islands and Gibraltar. UK's largest-endowed maritime charity, with a mandate to provide education, training and welfare for mariners (seafarers) of all ages (e.g. Seafarers UK).	National (UK)	Charity/Third Sector financed by 'Light Dues' levied on commercial vessels calling at ports in the British Isles, based on the net registered tonnage of the vessel. The rate is set by the Department of Transport, and annually reviewed.	https://www.trinityhouse.co.uk
Seafarer Support	Helpline run by the Merchant Navy Welfare Board for current and former seafarers (Merchant Navy, Royal Navy, Royal Marines and fishermen) and their families as well as people who work to improve the lives of seafarers and their families. Advice provided through website and helpline includes practical, health, financial help, and career development, and support accessing (over 150) maritime welfare charities.	National (UK)	Charity/Third Sector financed by Trinity House, Seafarers UK, Merchant Navy Welfare Board, and Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity.	www.seafarerssupport.org
Togetherall (previously the Big White Wall)	A moderated, interactive online peer-to-peer mental health and well-being service providing access to millions with anxiety, depression and other common mental health issues by offering self-help programmes (short courses), creative outlets and a community that cares. Can be accessed for free by fishermen and their families through various charities e.g. Sailors' Children's Society, Seafarers Hospital Society.	National (UK)	Charity/Third Sector	https://togetherall.com https://www.sailorschildren.org.uk/our-work https://seahospital.org.uk/accessing-togetherall-fishermen

Services	Support	Geography	Funding	Website
Seafarers' Advice and Information Line (SAIL)	SAIL is a national telephone advice service provided exclusively for seafarers. It is run by Greenwich Citizens' Advice Bureaux (CAB) on behalf of the Seafarers Hospital Society.	National (UK)	Charity/Third Sector; financed by the Seafarers Hospital Society	www.sailine.org.uk
Seafarers Hospital Society	<p>Long-established maritime charity dedicated to meeting the health, welfare and advice needs of seafarers. Providing health and welfare grants to seafarers and their dependants, and to the maritime organisations that care for them. They also support a number of other services provided exclusively for seafarers (e.g. SAIL, Togetherall).</p> <p>Free, confidential service to seafarers who need help with mental health and well-being issues, which is run by Togetherall (previously Big White Wall) for the Society.</p> <p>Access to special medical facility for seafarers (the Dreadnought), and projects and services to support physical health and well-being.</p>	National (UK)	Charity/Third Sector	https://seahospital.org.uk
Stella Maris (The Apostleship of the Sea)	Serves seafarers from across the world, regardless of belief, nationality or race. In all the main ports in Great Britain our team of chaplains and volunteer ship visitors visit thousands of seafarers each year, meeting their needs through the provision of help, support and advice.	Global and National (UK) including Milford Haven, Pembroke Dock, Newport (nr Fishguard), Port Talbot, Cardiff		https://www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk
Well-being support – generic				
Community Advice and Listening Line (C.A.L.L)	Dedicated mental health helpline for Wales 24/7. They provide confidential listening and emotional support, via SMS, helpline, and website.	National (UK)		http://callhelpline.org.uk
Dewis Cymru	Dewis Cymru is web-based directory with information and advice on well-being issues. Available to people across Wales, it has contact details for local organisations and services that can help with well-being issues.	National (UK)		https://www.dewis.wales
Mind Cymru	Provides advice and support for anyone experiencing a mental health problem. Information is available about where to get help, medication and alternative treatments, via a helpline (not 24/7), SMS, or email.	National (UK)		https://www.mind.org.uk/about-us/mind-cymru
Samaritans	Provides support for any concern and information through a listening services that is 24/7 via helpline or SMS.	National (UK)		https://www.samaritans.org/wales

Services	Support	Geography	Funding	Website
Business and financial support for commercial fishermen				
The National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations	Providing a voice for fishermen, irrespective of where on the coast they are based or the size of the vessel they operate. Involved promoting sustainability, crew welfare and safety, safety and training.	National (UK)		http://nffo.org.uk
Seafish	Non-Departmental Public Body set up to support the £10 billion UK seafood industry.	National (UK)		https://www.seafish.org
Welsh Seafood Cluster	Business Development Programme aims to enable Welsh fisheries businesses to create jobs and sustainable economic growth by supporting the sector to grow through the provision of specific support.	National (Wales)		https://businesswales.gov.wales/foodanddrink/growing-your-business/clusters
Welsh Fishermen's Association – Cymdeithas Pysgotwyr Cymru (WFA-CPC)	National body representing the interests of the fishing industry in Wales, bringing together the five regional associations whose members range from inshore static gear fishermen to offshore scallop, trawler and whelk fishermen.	National (Wales)		http://wfa-cpc.wales
South & West Wales Fishing Communities Ltd	Regional association.	Wales - South & West		
Cardigan Bay Fisherman's Association Ltd	Regional association.	Wales - West		
Llyn Pot Fishermen's Association	Regional association.	Wales - North		
Llyn Fisherman's Association	Regional association.	Wales - North		
North Wales Fishermen's Co-Operative	Regional association.	Wales - North		

Services	Support	Geography	Funding	Website
Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs)	A private/voluntary & community/public sector partnership that aims to assist the area's coastal communities and the local fishing industry to improve the economic prosperity and quality of life in the area. The programme aim is to deliver fisheries focused on Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) in Wales. This will be done through a Local Development Strategy (LDS) designed by each of the FLAGs.		The FLAGs funding forms part of the EMFF (European Structural Funding) which is programmed to run to 2020	
Cleddau to Coast FLAG	To improve the economic and environmental sustainability of the Pembrokeshire fishing industry by adding value, diversification and collaborative working arrangements, and to ensure the voice and welfare of fishing communities are understood and promoted.	Wales - Pembrokeshire	The FLAGs funding forms part of the EMFF (European Structural Funding) which is programmed to run to 2020 2007-2013 2014-2020	https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/cms/farnet2/on-the-ground/flag-factsheets/cleddau-coast-flag_ro
Cardigan Bay FLAG	The development of fisheries jobs is a key challenge to the area.	Wales - Pembrokeshire	The FLAG funding forms part of the EMFF (European Structural Funding) which is programmed to run to 2020 2007-2013 2014-2020	http://pysgod.cymru/cardigan.php https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/cms/farnet2/on-the-ground/flag-factsheets/cardigan-bay-flag-0_ro
North Wales FLAG	The North Wales Fisheries Local Action Group supports the fishing industry and associated communities across North Wales.	Wales - North	The FLAG funding forms part of the EMFF (European Structural Funding) which is programmed to run to 2020 2014-2020	https://www.mentermon.com/en/priosectau/gogledd-cymru-flag
Swansea Bay FLAG	A key challenge for the region is the ongoing decline of the amount of fish landed in the area and the impact this is having on regional employment and local communities.	Wales - Swansea	The FLAG funding forms part of the EMFF (European Structural Funding) which is programmed to run to 2020 2014-2020	https://www.swansea.gov.uk/sbflag https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/cms/farnet2/on-the-ground/flag-factsheets/swansea-bay-flag-0_ro
Business and financial support – generic				
Menter a Busnes	Supports business start-up and growth for individuals, groups and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) across Wales and beyond, through our tailor-made business support programmes.	Wales - National with regional offices		https://menterabusnes.cymru/about



GIG
CYMRU
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WALES

Iechyd Cyhoeddus
Cymru
Public Health
Wales

Research and Evaluation

Research and Evaluation Division
Knowledge Directorate
Public Health Wales NHS Trust
Number 2 Capital Quarter
Tyndall Street
Cardiff CF10 4BZ

Tel: +44 (0)29 2022 7744

Email: phw.research@wales.nhs.uk

 @PHREWales

 @PublicHealthWales



Mental Health
Foundation



Mental Health Foundation
Workbench
16 Neptune Court
Cardiff
CF24 5PJ

Tel: +44(0) 2921 679400

Email: info@mentalhealth.org.uk

 @mentalhealth

www.mentalhealth.org.uk/wales

phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/knowledge-directorate/research-and-evaluation