



CURRENT AWARENESS BULLETIN

Mental Health & Learning Disabilities

March 2026

This is your monthly Current Awareness Bulletin produced by Somerset Foundation Trust Knowledge & Library Services.

It is intended to provide you with a range of the most up-to-date resources, including recently published guidelines and research articles, news and policy items.

The link summaries, in this bulletin, may have been generated in part or in full by AI.



SPOTLIGHTS

Resources updates

PsycInfo Database- We're excited to share that we now have access to PsycInfo, a leading database covering psychological, social, behavioural, and health sciences. This is a reference to find research on mental health, human behaviour, psychology and more – this the perfect companion for evidence search or study support. [Let us know if you'd like help getting started!](#)

UptoDate clinical decision tool- Access to UptoDate is cancelled from **31st March**, if you'd like to know more please click here to read our full statement: [UptoDate statement](#). We are providing training sessions on an alternative clinical decision support tool- BMJ Best Practice. To book into those please click here: [BMJ Best Practice Drop-In Sessions](#). We have a speciality trainer from BMJ attending the following sessions to give you a rundown of how to make the most of your BMJ account, accessing evidence and supporting you with any questions you might have:

- 31st March 2:30-3:00pm
- 22nd April 10:30-11:00am

Event: Year of Reading

2026 has been designated the **Year of Reading**, a national initiative celebrating the joy and wellbeing benefits of reading and encouraging people of all ages to discover (or rediscover!) the pleasure of books. Throughout the year, The Knowledge & Library Service will be hosting a range of activities to help staff connect through reading, try something new, and share stories across our Somerset FT community. Here's a sneak peek at some of the events and activities we're planning:

- Silent Book Club – 23 April- A calm, welcoming space to bring your current read, settle in, and enjoy some quiet shared reading time at lunch.
- Blind Date with a Book - We'll run more Blind Date events throughout the year after - keep an eye out for future dates!
- Summer Reading Challenge – 22 June to 4 September A relaxed, fun challenge for staff to set personal reading goals over the summer months.

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GOVERNMENT AND NATIONAL BODIES

UK Government

Department of Health & Social Care

[Government response to the Health and Social Care Committee's fourth report of session 2024 to 2026: community mental health services](#)

– Published 11th March. The government has committed to major mental health reforms, including co-producing new service models with people with lived experience and rolling out 24/7 Neighbourhood Mental Health Centres across England, with priorities focused on expanding community services, publishing the Modern Service Framework in 2026, strengthening key-worker roles and youth-to-adult transitions, improving digital interoperability, securing stable funding for VCFSE partners, investing in workforce development and retention, and enhancing accountability through clearer national standards and greater transparency.

[Neighbourhood health framework](#). Published 17th March. This policy paper defines what neighbourhood health means, outlines the key challenges these local health and care services must address, sets out clear success metrics and a process for developing local indicators, and clarifies the roles of ICBs, local authorities, health and wellbeing boards, and other partners in designing and delivering neighbourhood-level health and care.

[Taskforce set up to deliver urgent action on maternity](#). Published 17th March. A new taskforce—led by experts and families with lived experience—will implement the recommendations of Baroness Amos's upcoming review, aiming to deliver safer and more equitable care for women, babies, and families, supported by a £25 million investment for trusts to address drivers of maternal deaths, strengthen bereavement facilities, and improve triage services.

Care Quality Commission

[Good practice in caring for people with dementia](#). Published 10th March. Research from September 2025 highlights that high-quality dementia care is person-led, culturally sensitive, and delivered by well-trained staff, supported by strong leadership and effective partnership working, with a focus on individuality, meaningful activity, community connection, equality, and flexible, respectful support.

Data

NHS England Digital

[Mental Health Services Monthly Statistics](#) – reporting period: up to January 2026

News: change in the Mental Health dashboard: [NHS Mental Health Dashboard](#). The Mental Health Dashboard is being retired, with a new version scheduled to launch in September 2026. In the meantime, NHS England has released a [signposting document](#) that provides links to published data covering most of the metrics previously included in the dashboard.

Complementary data in [Mental Health Watch](#) with the latest data from February 2026.

Office for National Statistics

[Links between parental mental health, child mental health, and school outcomes, England](#). Published 18th March. This analysis shows interrelation between children and parents suffering from mental illness. This also shows the impact on school attainment. "The analysis is for England only, using Hospital Episode Statistics, Emergency Care Dataset data, National Pupil Database, and NHS Talking Therapies (for adults), linked to Census 2021".

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CHARITIES AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Centre for Mental Health

[Trauma-informed care and racialised communities](#) - published 2nd March. The report calls for culturally responsive, human-rights-based, anti-racist trauma-informed mental health care, developed through collaboration and supported by the Patient and Carer Race Equality Framework. It also notes an upcoming NHS Race & Health Observatory webinar on 23rd April. More information below.

[Strengths-based support for neurodivergent children and young people](#) – published 12th March. Standard mental health programmes often fail neurodivergent children, who may find them stressful or inaccessible. Strengths-based, sensory-informed and play-based approaches—such as LEGO® therapy—improve engagement and wellbeing. Support should be treated as a reasonable adjustment, with services adapting to children’s sensory and communication needs.

Royal College of Psychiatrists – 10 posts for March. Spotlight : [One consultant psychiatrist for every 2,500 people who will experience a mental illness each year in England, latest census shows](#) - England’s latest RCPsych census reveals severe psychiatrist shortages—with one consultant for every 2,540 people expected to experience mental illness each year—driving unmanageable workloads, high vacancy rates, and urgent calls for long-term workforce investment.

The British Psychological Society – 27 posts for March. Spotlight: [BPS welcomes inquiry’s calls for greater psychological support for NHS workforce](#) – The BPS welcomes the Covid inquiry’s call for nationwide, scalable psychological support for NHS staff after findings showed the pandemic severely worsened workforce wellbeing and burnout.

Mental Elf – 21 posts for March. Spotlight: [Do prescribed opioids increase self-harm and suicide?](#) - Study of 3 million Australian adults prescribed opioids, 84% of self-harm events and 81% of suicides didn’t involve opioids. Challenges belief that prescribing increases self-harm risk.

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OTHER NEWS / GENERAL INTERESTS

NHS Trusts

Sussex Partnership - [Mental health service working in partnership with emergency services to support people in crisis.](#) Published 2nd March. “the Blue Light Line Rapid Response service provides 24-hour mental health advice and guidance to support emergency services, including Sussex Police, South East Coast Ambulance Service, Beachy Head Chaplains, the Fire Service, Coastguard and the British Transport Police.”

Black Country Healthcare - [Local NHS Trust backed to tackle smoking in the Black Country](#) – Published 11th March. “A grant of over £45,000 has been given to a local mental health NHS Trust to expand vape support for patients throughout the next year.”

Kent and Medway Mental Health NHS Trust - [NHS first: Kent and Medway trust digitally records peer support outcomes](#)– Published 12th March. “The trust has introduced 3 innovations within its digital patient record system: the Hope, Agency and Opportunity (HAO) outcome measure, a dedicated peer support intervention tab, and an intended activity SNOMED code”.

Awards

Health Service Journal

[HSJ Awards](#) – Entries are open for HSJ Awards. Deadline for submission is **29th May**. To make a submission: [HSJ Awards](#). See all the categories: [Award Categories 2026](#). See scoring matrix: [Judging Criteria](#).

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LEARNING RESOURCES and RESOURCES FOR PATIENTS

National Events

NHS Race & Health Observatory - [Webinar: Trauma informed care and racialised communities](#), 23rd April, 11am-12pm. Online event. “Join the NHS Race and Health Observatory and Centre for Mental Health for a webinar following the launch of our new report, [Trauma-informed care and racialised communities](#).” Speakers include Dame Marie Gabriel, Abdirahim Hassan, David Woodhead and Khaleel Mohammed.

National 0-5s Mental Health Shared Learning webinar

The Perinatal Mental Health and Children and Young People’s Mental Health team invite people to attend a national webinar on Friday 24 April, 1:00pm – 3:00pm. The webinar will focus on 0-5s mental health, specifically sharing learning through good practice case study examples and overcoming implementation challenges. [Register using this link](#)



Trust events

Schwartz round – Thu 31st March. 2-3pm (virtual). Theme: “A day in the life of”. Book a place on LEAP or via email: schwartzrounds@somersetft.nhs.uk

“Schwartz Rounds are a reflective space for all colleagues to come together to reflect on the human side of care. Schwartz Rounds are for everyone and suitable for all colleagues of all bandings and all job roles.”

💡 **Schwartz round team** is currently looking for colleagues who would be happy to join a panel and share a short, reflective story connected to the theme of that Round.

Why become a panellist? Schwartz Rounds offer a safe, supportive and non-judgmental space where staff from all roles can come together, listen, and reflect. By sharing your story, you will help others feel understood, encouraged, and less alone in the challenges we face.

What does being a panellist involve?

- Sharing a short reflective story related to the theme (approx. 5 mins long)
- Speaking openly about how the situation made you feel
- Helping create a compassionate, supportive space for colleagues

You will be supported and coached by one of our trained facilitators throughout the process.

Upcoming Schwartz Rounds:

- 29th April, 14.00-15.00, face to face, Wellspring.

Improvement and Research Grand Round – new collaboration between Research and Improvement. The first event is on 28th April. Musgrove Park Hospital Academy -Seminar Room 4 and live stream. Book your place [here](#)

Adrian Hayes is also leading a Mental health research network that meets monthly, contact him if you would like to be added to the mailing list: Adrian.hayes@somersetft.nhs.uk

Conference

Brain Waves – [Living Well conference 2026](#). Monday 6th July – A scientific and educational conference on adolescent mental wellbeing will bring together researchers and teachers, featuring speakers Professor Sarah Bauermeister, Professor John Gallacher, and Alex Yates, with early-bird tickets available until 30 April.

NHS ConfedExpo 2026 - Wednesday 10 to Thursday 11 June 2026 - [Registration is open for NHS ConfedExpo 2026](#) - Join 6,000+ health and care leaders, professionals and partners on 10-11 June at Manchester Central to discover innovative approaches turning ambition into reality.

Resources

🎧 **Podcast – [The Hidden 20%](#)** - Weekly podcast featuring a variety of guests who discuss the strengths and challenges of being neurodiverse, aiming to raise awareness and challenge stereotypes, with over 100 episodes available on major platforms.

Resources for patients

🌐 **Website - [Autism Central](#)** - A national NHS-commissioned programme delivered by Anna Freud provides co-produced education, coaching, and peer-led support for autistic people of all ages and their families.

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RESEARCH ARTICLES

Please bear in mind that any articles marked ‘online ahead of print’ might be awaiting final corrections before print, but if they are from a peer-reviewed journal, they should have been peer reviewed

Note: We will endeavour to use the best, most appropriate sources available. It is the responsibility of the requestor to determine the accuracy, validity and interpretation of the articles. No responsibility can be taken by the library for any action taken on the basis of this information. If you need some support to critically appraise the information, here is our [training guide](#) on this.

General interests

Ahluwalia Y., Jangra D., Singh S., et al. (2026) **Neurocognitive functioning in gambling: A systematic review of comparisons with other psychiatric and comorbid conditions.** *Psychiatry research*, 359(pagination), pp. Article Number: 117000. Date of Publication: 01 May 2026 <https://libkey.io/libraries/2838/10.1016/j.psychres.2026.117000>.

Bistricky, S.L., Doenges, T.J., Brom, G., et al. (2026) **Providing accessible, effective services to promote postinjury psychological adjustment: Lessons learned from a stepped care intervention program pilot** *Psychological Services*, .

Brandt, L., De Prisco, M., Nocera, D., et al. (-03-04, 2026) **Climate-Related and Nature-Based Interventions for Mental Health: An Umbrella Review and Meta-Analysis** *JAMA Psychiatry*, <https://libkey.io/libraries/2838/10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2026.0037>.



- Bustillo, A.M. 2026) **Embedding diversity, equity, and inclusion practices in sexual violence prevention education** *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, .
- Cudzik M., Lis M., Wichniak A. and Bienkowski, P. 2026) **Alexithymia among patients with obesity - systematic review.***Journal of psychiatric research*, 193, pp. 519–527 <https://libkey.io/libraries/2838/10.1016/j.jpsychires.2025.12.030>.
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- Dückers, M.L.A., Stroebe, M.S., Baliatsas, C., et al. 2026) **The Long-Term Mental Health Impact of Disasters: A Systematic Review and Multilevel Meta-Analysis of Longitudinal Epidemiological Studies** *Harvard review of psychiatry*, 34(2), pp. 59–72 <https://libkey.io/libraries/2838/10.1097/HRP.0000000000000450>.
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- Lakshmi B.A., Buddolla V., Gubbiyappa K.S., et al. 2026) **Psychobiotics for the treatment of neuropsychiatric, neurodegenerative, and neurodevelopmental disorders: A systematic review.***Progress in Neuro-Psychopharmacology and Biological Psychiatry*, 145(pagination), pp. Article Number: 111636. Date of Publication: 20 Mar 2026 <https://libkey.io/libraries/2838/10.1016/j.pnpbp.2026.111636>.
- Santonja-Ayuso, L. and Carmona-Simarro, J.V. (Feb, 2026) **Prevention and mental health promotion interventions led by mental health nurses: A systematic review** *Archives of Psychiatric Nursing*, 60, pp. 152056 <https://libkey.io/libraries/2838/10.1016/j.apnu.2026.152056>.
- Shui, A., van den Berg, G.J., Mierau, J.O. and Viluma, L. (-03, 2026) **The impact of mining-induced earthquakes on mental health: Evidence from the Dutch Lifelines Cohort Study and Biobank** *Journal of Health Economics*, 106, pp. 103118 <https://libkey.io/libraries/2838/10.1016/j.jhealeco.2026.103118>.
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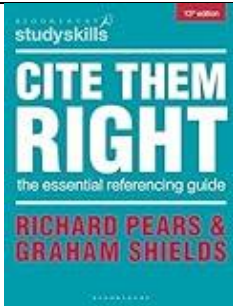
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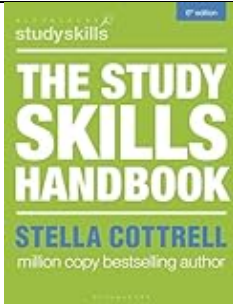
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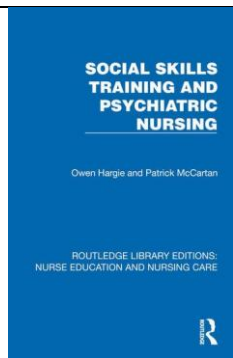
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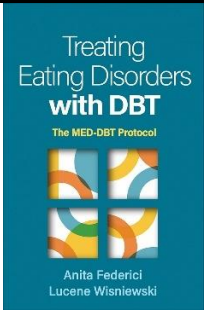
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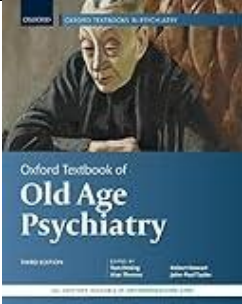
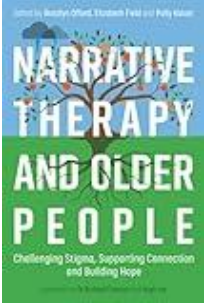
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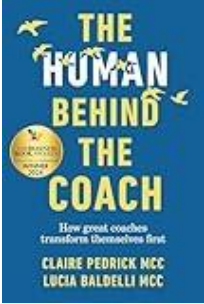


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