

Health & Social Services Committee

HSS(2)-16-06(p11)

Meeting date: Wednesday 15 November 2006

Venue: Committee Room 1, Senedd, National Assembly for Wales

Title: Additional Information from the Disability Rights Commission on Health Inequalities Investigation

The following is the text of the letter of 24 October from the Director of the DRC to the Chair of the Committee:

We would like to thank you and the Health and Social Services Committee members for discussing our Health investigation 'Equal Treatment : Closing the Gap, Report for Wales', at the Committee on 11th October.

In response to a question from Jenny Randerson AM, we promised to provide further information on healthcare in prisons. Paragraph 4.7.3 of our 'Evidence paper', a literature review, includes this section on health of Prisons.

"4.7.3 People in prisons

Around 10% of people in prison have a psychosis and over half have some form of neurosis (Singleton et al 1998). Both groups are likely to have physical health problems as well (ibid). Around half of those who are sentenced to custody are not registered with a GP prior to being sent to prison (Prison Reform Trust 2005). The number of people in prison who have learning disabilities is not known: the limited current data are considered to be under-estimates and more accurate identification is needed (Myers 2004).

Healthcare provision in prisons is now the responsibility of Primary Care Trusts in England and Local Health Boards in Wales, and prisoners are entitled to 'a similar level of health services as are available to members of the general public under the NHS' (HM Prison Service 2005). Although concerns have been expressed about the quality of provision provided, improvements in standards are gradually being implemented (Triggle 2006)."

All the DRC publications associated with this investigation can be found on the DRC website. www.drc-gb.org/healthinvestigation

This particular 'Evidence Paper' can be found amongst the research reports. http://www.drc.org.uk/docs/Evidence_paper_2006.doc

We are pleased that the Committee agreed to table this item again before the Assembly elections in

order to review the Welsh Assembly Government's initial response and progress made against the report's recommendations.

Please do get in touch should members require any further information.

William Bee
Director DRC Wales.