

# P-05-1078 Increase funding for mental health services and improve waiting times for people needing help in crisis.

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 12 Ionawr 2021  
Petitions Committee | 12 January 2021

Reference: RS20/14837

## Introduction

**Petition number:** P-05-1078

**Petition title:** Increase funding for mental health services and improve waiting times for people needing help in crisis. We need a change!

**Text of petition:** Since covid 19 and lockdown people have been stuck inside for months on end, many of these people were suffering before lockdown and during lockdown. I for one suffered myself because of lockdown, and I am concerned about the number of suicides in my area since before lockdown and during. Lockdown has made people's mental health worse and has put mental health services under severe pressure, young children are suffering adults and the elderly are suffering due to lockdown.

Our Welsh Parliament should be taking action on mental health and funding more services people are waiting a long time to be seen or given help. Many local doctors and nurses are not trained in mental health.



The percentage of people reporting mental health problems increased from 23.3% in 2017-2019 to 36.8% in April 2020 (UK Household Longitudinal Study). If this doesn't scream how lockdown is drastically changing the way we live our lives and fights the battles we have to fight on a daily basis, then I'm not sure what will?

## Background

In a [written statement](#) issued by the Minister for Mental Health, Well-being and Welsh Language, following her appointment on 8 October 2020, Eluned Morgan MS explained that **mental health services were classified as an 'essential service'** during the early stages of the coronavirus pandemic and states that people have been able to access mental health services when they've needed them. However, mental health charities such as a [Mind Cymru say](#) that access to mental health support has been difficult during the pandemic, with nearly a quarter of people being unable to get the help they need.

In [written evidence](#) to the Senedd's Health, Social Care and Sport Committee on 4 November 2020, the Minister for Mental Health, Well-being and Welsh Language identified a number of priority areas for mental health for the next 3 years, including "**Further improvements to crisis and out-of-hours provision** for children, working age and older adults – moving to a common, multiagency offer across Wales including ensuring appropriate support and conveyancing for crisis care".

The Welsh Government updated its [Together for Mental Health Delivery Plan 2019-22](#) in response to the coronavirus pandemic on 9 October 2020.

The Welsh Government's [Winter Protection Plan 2020-21](#), published in September 2020 set out the priorities for health and social care until March 2021, including the need to continue to position mental health as an 'essential service'.

The Minister's [written statement](#) sets out Welsh Government investment in mental health services, stating; "We invest around £700m every year in NHS mental health services and protect that investment through the mental health ring-fence".

The Welsh Government published its [Draft Budget for 2021/22](#) on 21 December 2020. The Draft Budget document sets out how the Welsh Government intends to invest in mental health and well-being (see page 28). It states that "**protecting**

**mental health services in 2021-22 remains a priority**". The Welsh Government states in its Draft Budget document that;

Recognising the impact that the pandemic has had on many people's mental health and wellbeing, we are allocating an additional £20m within Health and Social Services to increase support across a range of areas. We will raise our commitment under A Healthier Wales for the Mental Health Service Improvement Fund through doubling our funding from £7m to £14m, and providing increased support for frontline non-clinical services, all age crisis support and memory assessment services.

It goes on to say;

Taken together with the increase in the NHS Mental Health ring fence for pay and inflation, this translates to more than £42m of additional investment supporting mental health services in 2021-22. Further investment in mental health can be seen across government, in line with our approach to prevention and protection of mental health and wellbeing, including employment support, debt advice, housing support, sports and access to green spaces, as set out in Together for Mental Health Delivery Plan.

Two Senedd Committees – the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee and the Children, Young People and Education Committee will be scrutinising the Minister for Mental Health, Well-being and the Welsh Language on the Welsh Government's Draft Budget for 2021-22 in relation to mental health and wellbeing in January 2020.

## Welsh Parliament action

The Senedd's Health, Social Care and Sport Committee published its report '[Inquiry into the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak, and its management, on health and social care in Wales: Report 2 - Impact on mental health and wellbeing](#)' on 17 December 2020. The report contains 15 recommendations for improving mental health and well-being support for people in Wales.

The Children, Young People and Education Committee published its report '[Mind over matter: Two years on](#)' on 9 October 2020. The report calls on the Welsh Government to do more to support children and young people with mental health needs. Senedd Research published a blog '[mental health, young people](#)

and the pandemic' ahead of a Plenary debate on the report on 11 December 2020.

The Welsh Youth Parliament also published its report 'Let's Talk About Mental Health' on 9 October 2020.

In October 2019, the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee published a report on mental health crisis care, 'Mental health in policing and police custody' which the Welsh Government responded to on 10 December 2019.

## Welsh Government response

The Welsh Government has not yet provided a response on this Petition.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.