



Cross-Party Group on Suicide Prevention – sponsored by Lynne Neagle MS
Monday 25th January 2021 2pm – 3.30pm
Meeting held by video conference

Minutes

Attendees: Alun Fletcher (Mental Health Matters Wales), Ana Laing (Samaritans) Andrea Gray (Public Health Wales), Andrea Prevett, Bleddyn Jones (South Wales Fire and Rescue), Ceri Fowler (Aneurin Bevan UHB), Ceri Lovell (Cardiff and Vale UHB), Claire Cotter (NHS Wales Health Collaborative), David Patel (Betsi Cadwaladr UHB), David Williams (Farming Community Network), Eleri Cabbage (Welsh Parliament) Frederick Hottinger (Hafan Cymru - Men's Sheds), Glenn Page (Mind Cymru), Helen Bennett (Office of South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner), Janet Whiteman (New Horizons Mental Health), Janette Bourne (Cruse Cymru), Kate Heneghan (Papyrus), Leann Saunders (South Wales Police), Lisa Hammett (Living in Suicide's Shadow), Liz Williams (Royal College of Psychiatrists), Maggy Corkhill (Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB Together for Mental Health Partnership Board), Nicola Abraham (Jacob Abraham Foundation), Nicole Lloyd (2 Wish Upon A Star), Peter Thomas (South Wales Police), Rebecca Stringer (Cardiff and Vale UHB), Rob Palmizi (Citizens Advice Cymru), Steve Siddall (RNLI), Sarah Stone (Samaritans), Steve Thomas (Welsh Government/Dyfed Powys Police).

Apologies: Nick Ramsay MS, Llyr Gruffydd MS, Helen Mary Jones MS, Lesley Rose (SOBS), Eric Thwaites (SOBS), Nikki Jones (Manon Jones Foundation), Philippa Watkins (Welsh Parliament), Becky Jones (2 Wish Upon A Star), David Richards (Gwent Police), David Crews (South Wales Fire and Rescue), Gareth Davies (Tir Dewi), Emily Wooster (Mental Health Foundation), Kirrin Davidson (Children's Commissioner for Wales).

1. Welcome and Introductions

Lynne Neagle MS welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that some of what will be discussed may be triggering for some and encouraged attendees to feel free to step away from the meeting if needed and reach out for support following the meeting.

2. Minutes from last meeting & matters arising

The minutes from the previous meeting were accepted.

3. Presentation on Samaritans Self-Harm report - Sarah Stone, Samaritans Executive Director for Wales.

A copy of Samaritans self-harm report *The Right Support at the Right Time?* had been circulated in advance of the meeting and Sarah delivered a presentation to the group on the report and its recommendations.

David Williams asked Sarah Stone about Samaritans recent self-harm report and whether as part of the research there had been any focus on rural communities or conclusions to be drawn from the research related to rural communities who can find it harder to access services. Sarah explained that the report does not contain that level of data and the polling Samaritans commissioned was across all Wales. Sarah explained she would be interested to hear David's further thoughts on this work and what could be done to explore this area further.

Lynne Neagle MS asked Sarah at what extent is data regarding self-harm recorded and whether there is currently a requirement to report on self-harm. Sarah explained that our understanding is that data on self-harm is available in England but there is variable recording of self-harm across Wales. Unfortunately, we do not have a consistent picture of what is happening in Wales. Glenn Page added that he found the Samaritans self-harm report interesting and welcomed the recommendations especially around data. Glenn explained that currently some self-harm data is published by Welsh Government and Public Health Wales on A & E admissions, but this does not collect all data about self-harm that is happening. There is work underway to develop mental health core data, and there is an urgency to get this delivered so we can get this data for self-harm, not just for A&E but for all services in Wales. Glenn added that it would also be good to have this data available broken down by different ethnicities. Also, Glenn suggested that when this data is available it could be linked to the Welsh index of multiple deprivation so various analysis of the figures could be carried out, including on areas such as rurality. Glenn added that we need the data set developed and Welsh Government need to be transparent about what they do know already.

Sara Moseley agreed with Glenn and asked Sarah Stone about thresholds for therapy and how we can look at access to services when people need it. In the pandemic Mind have been supported by Welsh Government and Welsh Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) to develop ways people are able to access services during the pandemic, this has also included social prescribing and self-referrals. Sara added that many self-referrals include cases of people experiencing quite significant mental distress. There is not a barrier there to accessing services as people can self-refer and have a more direct way of seeking support and having a system set up this way is showing good outcome measures for the services.

Sara asked whether Samaritans self-harm report is referring to specific therapies or in general. Sarah S explained that specific therapies were mentioned in the report, but the report is not prescriptive to certain therapies. Sarah added that the report and recommendations are for further discussion and it would be good to connect with evidence Mind are collecting and work together and develop.

Rebecca Stringer commented on a point about whole school support and capturing those children not accessing school education e.g., due to homelessness, asylum seekers etc. Rebecca added she thought the data capture Glenn mentioned sounds helpful and there is a need to reach provision to those living in various communities including those attending pupil referral units, special schools, excluded pupils and those who are homeless.

Sarah Stone explained we have done work on exclusion previously and this is a lens we need to apply when thinking of young people. Lynne advised she sits on the ministerial group on whole school approach and they are very mindful they need to make sure they provide support for children in pupil referral units.

Glenn Page commented on thresholds for access into services and single point of entry currently available. At the moment, people have to visit GP to get referrals to access services and there is not always clear guidance on what the guidance is for referral and these thresholds. A diagnosis from a GP impacts where people are referred, and it is interesting to explore self-referrals and listening to what individuals feel they need. Not everyone visits their GP for support. Lynne commented how the pandemic has shown many new ways of working including parents referring children into CAMHS.

Ceri Lovell echoed what Glenn said and explained that self-referrals are something to look at down the line. Ceri is currently doing some work looking at single point of access for services for young people up to the age of 18 and is hoping to stop young people being passed around to various services and explained that more of a pathway is needed.

Janet Whiteman explained she is an active member of Cwm Taf suicide and self-harm prevention group and the group would echo recommendation 10 of Samaritans self-harm report regarding ensuring self-harm is given equal weight in local and regional forums. This has been something the Cwm Taf forum have been trying to raise for a long time. There is also work being done locally in collaboration with New Horizons, Samaritans and other organisations who have worked together on a funding bid to support those with lived experience of self-harm.

Lynne asked how we can address the issue raised in recommendation 10. Sarah S explained that at the moment we have developing suicide and self-harm prevention arrangements, a new national coordinator and regional forums with their coordinators. We need to let arrangements settle in, but we would like forums to give self-harm prevention a higher profile. Sarah explained she hopes that off the back of report we can have something which informs us with something to use to take this work forward.

Claire Cotter explained that she and the regional coordinators are thinking about forward planning work and this report is very welcome. There is a risk that self-harm can fall off radar and they are looking at regional arrangements of the forums and also have (as a result of the Everybody's Business report) a grant programme available to stimulate innovation which will be distributed to regions through a bidding process. This will set out what will be prioritised in terms of assessing bids and self-harm is a key part of this.

David Patel explained that he and the other regional coordinators are linking in with local and regional groups in areas the regional co-ordinators cover and are looking into self-harm as part of support. Self-harm can be harder to bring about change and support, but the regional groups are looking at it.

Ana Laing asked whether there is a sense of how things are for self-harm support and whether it has been affected by the pandemic and whether less support is currently available. Lynne Neagle MS explained this has been raised with Welsh Government and they have assured the Senedd Health and Social and Children, Young People and Education committees that mental health services have been prioritised as essential services, but the committees are unsure about whether this is case in practice.

Claire Cotter explained her initial learning around self-harm is there are not really specific services available. Claire added that without certain thresholds and diagnosis, people do not get referred on so there are lots of complexities involved. Data quality and threshold quality is important along with how receptive workforce are when people seek help. Also, it is important to remember that not everyone who self-harms accesses support.

Sara Moseley thought Claire's point was interesting and explained that Matrics Cymru guides delivery of talking therapies within Wales, but we know access to some of those more specialist services can be difficult with gaps in availability of specialists. There seems to be prevalence of self-harm in young people as a way to cope, and Mind have also seen those who may have been struggling in certain ways before, things have been exacerbated in a major way since pandemic e.g., obsessive behaviours, eating disorders etc. Sara commented that difficulty to access certain services has increased since the pandemic but it has always been an issue. Ceri Lovell agreed with Sara about eating being a way of controlling for lots of people and she has seen many presenting quite critically with these issues.

David Williams explained he is also as Chair of Bassaleg School Governors and they would welcome the opportunity to work with any organisations in the local area and he will share his contact details. David added that self-harm is a real issue which the school are seeing children from a variety of backgrounds experience and there are many underlying issues children and young people have.

Lynne Neagle MS asked Sarah Stone how the CPG could take forward issues discussed in Samaritans self-harm report and what would be most helpful for CPG to do. SS explained that there are questions around data and self-referrals that need to be followed up and a conversation with Sara Moseley and colleagues at Mind Cymru would help stimulate further ideas.

Lynne explained that group will have seen letter Lynne sent to Welsh Government regarding crisis care services and the pandemic and Lynne thanked Sara Moseley for her help with letter. Sara M commented that she thought the letter of response from the Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing, Eluned Morgan MS was really helpful. Sara added that in the letter it indicated that there had been delay in some of the areas highlighted in areas around care and treatment plans, so it is worth the CPG keeping on top of that and making sure those recommendations are bedded in and the delay does not continue to be extended. Sara explained she understands that work is going on to improve quality of crisis care plans, but it is hard to get decent view of where and how its happening. Sara also suggested it may be worth going back through Together for Mental Health (T4MH) and looking at what part of the update speaks to agenda of those committees and how that could be properly implemented. We also need to keep a watching brief on the implementation of the crisis care concordat.

Glenn Page agreed that the response around urgent access review is helpful but need to see urgency on delivering on actions from the concordat and keep eye on timescales. Glenn suggested it would be good to understand what Welsh Government feels the timescales are for delivering on the ambitions they have set out. He added that the letter talks about formal reporting from April 2021, so suggested it could be worth writing again after that for an update on those areas when they will have been reported on.

Lynne Neagle MS explained that issues on crisis care have been picked up in the Health committee's work on Covid and asked whether there is anything additional we could do in terms of Samaritans work on self-harm. SS said we should see how it evolves, but we want people to discuss the recommendations and suggested the CPG could pick this up again later in year. SS added it would be good to look at something specific around theme of data and asked whether others think there is benefit of a communication around that and need for good quality data.

Lynne explained that the issue of data comes up a lot and that it is unclear whether self-harm data is being included in a core data set that is being developed and suggested that there could be something to pick up around that.

Sara M explained the urgent access review has been the best snapshot we have had of self-harm in Wales and lots of self-harm data will come through that, but it is about what to do with it.

4. Update on Self Harm in relation to Covid-19 - Sara Moseley, Director, Mind Cymru

A written update had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Sara explained that the pandemic has amplified what has already been there in terms of mental health crisis and issues around access to services. The NHS Wales National Collaborative Commissioning Unit's urgent access review was commissioned before pandemic and found that there were 950 mental health calls made to emergency services in Wales every day about crises relating to self-harm. The highest proportion of calls are from 16 – 25-year-olds.

Sara added that Mind Cymru have carried out their own research into the impact of Coronavirus on mental health and found a third of young people were self-harming to cope and were twice as likely to cope through self-harm as adults were. They also found an overlap between young people receiving free school meals and self-harm. Sara explained there is a need to pinpoint who is most at risk and where should we be focusing our support. We know self-harm is not exclusive to certain groups but there are pockets of groups particularly at risk. Mind's research also found there was an

overlap found in adults living in social housing and self-harm and there is an emerging picture of people most likely to self-harm.

Mind are going to re-run the survey 6 months on and look at what is happening, and Sara suggested they could come back and present again when they have those results. Sara suggested an action could also be to look at reporting that will be coming back from health boards in terms of referrals, updates etc. There are lots of studies taking place at the moment and we should have a clearer picture over next few months and this CPG could then look further and develop actions off back of it.

5. Topic for next meeting

Lynne advised we will return to this topic at the next meeting. Lynne explained the Senedd will be dissolved ahead of elections in May if they go ahead. The next CPG meeting is scheduled for Monday 5th July 2pm – 3.30pm but if the elections are postponed then Lynne will liaise with Samaritans to plan a meeting before July.

Lynne thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.