

Cafodd yr ymateb hwn ei gyflwyno i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)

This response was submitted to the [Health and Social Care Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)

HSC PSS 28

Ymateb gan: | Response from: Coleg Brenhinol Therapyddion Galwedigaethol | Royal College of Occupational Therapists

Blaenoriaethau cychwynnol a nodwyd gan y Pwyllgor Initial priorities identified by the Committee

Mae'r Pwyllgor wedi nodi nifer o flaenoriaethau posibl ar gyfer ei waith yn ystod y Chweched Senedd, gan gynnwys: iechyd y cyhoedd a gwaith ataliol; y gweithlu iechyd a gofal cymdeithasol, gan gynnwys diwylliant sefydliadol a lles staff; mynediad at wasanaethau iechyd meddwl; arloesi ar sail tystiolaeth ym maes iechyd a gofal cymdeithasol; cymorth a gwasanaethau i ofalwyr di-dâl; mynediad at wasanaethau adsefydlu i'r rhai sydd wedi cael COVID ac i eraill; a mynediad at wasanaethau ar gyfer cyflyrau cronig tymor hir, gan gynnwys cyflyrau cyhyrsgerbydol.

The Committee has identified several potential priorities for work during the Sixth Senedd, including: public health and prevention; the health and social care workforce, including organisational culture and staff wellbeing; access to mental health services; evidence-based innovation in health and social care; support and services for unpaid carers; access to COVID and non-COVID rehabilitation services; and access to services for long-term chronic conditions, including musculoskeletal conditions.

C1. Pa rai o'r materion uchod ydych chi'n credu y dylai'r Pwyllgor roi blaenoriaeth iddynt, a pham?

Q1. Which of the issues listed above do you think should be a priority, and why?

Access to COVID and non-COVID rehabilitation services

We would welcome an inquiry into COVID and non-COVID rehabilitation services at the earliest opportunity. Rehabilitation needs (COVID and non-COVID) require an integrated response across health and social care, that focuses on the person's physical and mental health needs. Across Wales, there are inequalities in care and unwarranted variation in the commissioning of services, compounded by a lack of robust data available on long-term outcomes. This is an area on which the committee should focus.



Many rehabilitation services are commissioned for single conditions, such as stroke and pulmonary rehabilitation, rather than reflecting the needs of people living with more than one long term condition.

The drive towards integration is leading to the joining up of services, but further work is needed to ensure systems and services are coordinated and supporting people with:

- Mild rehabilitation needs to keep well in their home or community;
- Moderate rehabilitation needs to remain independent, maintain current function and mobility;
- Specialist rehabilitation to move back down the pathway and reduce or delay their need for long term care.

There will be many affected by the pandemic whose needs manifest across the system and will require intervention, including from the third sector, local government and housing. Rehabilitation then needs to be understood as a whole-system issue. An inquiry could highlight important areas of improvement throughout the system.

The mental health workforce

The mental health workforce plan presents an opportunity to create sustainable services which ensure that all people in Wales are able to access appropriate mental health support.

We also believe that multidisciplinary working – with a well-trained, supported workforce that is equipped to meet the demands – should be central to the future provision of mental health services for all ages. This should include professionals with specialist training and the mental health workforce must include the full range of allied health professionals and bring in new professions and skillsets. We therefore:

- Call for the committee to scrutinise the mental health workforce plan to ensure it considers the immediate challenges as well as the long-term vision for the workforce.
- Call for the committee to scrutinise the extent to which the plan will drive change and include a wide range of professions considered given recruitment challenges in the traditional workforce, and whether the plan engages widely across service user and professional groups.
- Call for the committee to ensure specialist skills and training are valued across the MDT.

Blaenoriaethau allweddol ar gyfer y Chweched Senedd

Key priorities for the Sixth Senedd

C2. Yn eich barn chi, pa flaenoriaethau allweddol eraill y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd mewn perthynas â:

- a) gwasanaethau iechyd;**
- b) gofal cymdeithasol a gofalwyr;**
- c) adfer yn dilyn COVID?**

Q2. In your view, what other key priorities should the Committee consider during the Sixth Senedd in relation to:

- a) health services;**
 - b) social care and carers;**
 - c) COVID recovery?**
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Gwasanaethau iechyd

Health services

Review of all-age neurodevelopmental services

We are calling for a short inquiry into the current Welsh Government funded demand and capacity review of all-age neurodevelopmental services. Given current issues within services, it is vital that the review incorporates the views of the broad range of stakeholders and that the findings support the development of long-term solutions. We believe additional scrutiny focused on identifying bottlenecks and pinch points within services, and formulating recommendations as to how services may meet demand for all ND services regardless of diagnosis, could be extremely beneficial.

Further background

MSs will be well aware from their post bags of the high demand for neurodevelopmental services and long waiting lists exacerbated by the pandemic. Members working in these services have fed back to us significant concerns about the sustainability of services and ability to meet need. This featured strongly within scrutiny of the proposed Autism bill during the last Senedd term. A recent Welsh Government funded [Scoping Study for the Alignment and Development of Autism and Neurodevelopmental Services](#) also highlighted significant workforce sustainability concerns.

We would welcome scrutiny of the current Welsh Government funded demand and capacity review of all-age neurodevelopmental services. Given current issues within services, it is vital that the review incorporates the views of the broad range of stakeholders and that the findings support the development of long-term solutions. We are calling for a short one day inquiry to understand bottlenecks and pinch points within services, and provide recommendations as to how services may meet demand for all ND services regardless of diagnosis.

We are of the view that such an inquiry should include feedback from neurodiverse people, representative service user organisations and professional bodies representing the range of health care professionals working in ND teams. We work closely with other professional bodies working in this area and would be very keen to discuss and support further.

Gofal Cymdeithasol a gofalwyr

Social care and carers

We support calls for parity of esteem between the health and social care workforces as this is essential to achieving a sustainable and well-trained workforce. Occupational therapists in the NHS and Social care are increasingly working together in integrated teams but have significantly different pay rates and training opportunities. We like an investigation to help develop opportunities for supporting an integrated workforce and how to develop career pathways across the system and not just within sectors.

Adfer yn dilyn COVID

COVID recovery

We would like there to be a focus on the impact of the pandemic on staff wellbeing. This has been a challenging period for our members, and they often report a variation of availability and standard in in NHS & Social Care occupational health services. Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) and Social Care Wales' workforce strategy sets out approaches needed to place wellbeing at centre of workforce plans and we'd recommend a review of this process.

Unrhyw faterion eraill

Any other issues

C3. A oes unrhyw faterion eraill yr hoffech dynnu sylw'r Pwyllgor atynt?

Q3. Are there any other issues you wish to draw to the Committee's attention?

Health inequalities

We are calling for an inquiry across all Senedd Committees on tackling health inequalities in Wales. Meaningful progress will require coherent efforts across all sectors to close the gap and an inquiry undertaken by all Senedd Committees will enable Committees to consider what action each Welsh Government department is doing to tackle the root cause of health inequalities and put forward recommendations around where improvements are needed.

We are calling for an inquiry across all Senedd Committees on tackling wider health inequalities in Wales. Health inequality is the result of many and varied factors. While COVID-19 has revealed and exacerbated pre-existing health inequalities, there have been many detailed and well-evidenced reports on health inequalities in recent years. In just the past year, many reports have called for system-wide action on health inequalities including the Welsh Health Equity Status Report initiative, *Placing health equity at the heart of the COVID-19 sustainable response and recovery* (Public Health Wales and Welsh Government), *Mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on health inequalities* (British Medical Association), *The Marmot Review 10 Years On* (Institute of Health Equity and the Health Foundation) and the most recent *Unequal pandemic, fairer recovery* (the Health Foundation). Every one of these reaffirms the need for coherent, coordinated activity across all delivery partners and in COVID-19 recovery, there is an opportunity to create a healthier, more resilient society, by addressing the root causes of poor health and invest in people and their communities – their jobs, housing, education and communities.

Health inequalities are the result of many factors and arise as a result of the social and economic inequalities that shape the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, learn, work and age. For too long, we have looked to the health service to address these challenges in isolation, but the NHS alone simply doesn't have the levers to make the changes we know are vital to creating the conditions necessary for good health and wellbeing. Meaningful progress will require coherent, strategic efforts across all sectors – using their available resources, expertise and relationships – to close the gap. It will also be important that we are able to understand and measure our collective progress to ensure that we achieve the outcomes that matter most.

In April 2021, the Welsh NHS Confederation's Health and Wellbeing Alliance published a short paper, *Making the difference: Tackling health inequalities in Wales*. In this paper, they suggest initial steps that the new Welsh Government should take in their first year to respond urgently to health inequalities and make the greatest possible impact by coordinating renewed commitment from all partners:

- Welsh Government leadership: sustained, focused and coordinated action across all Government departments to tackle the root causes of health inequalities.
- Invest in preventing health inequalities: rebalance spend away from crisis to long-term prevention over the next Senedd term and provide the necessary transition funds to

support the long-term shift to a preventative approach. Investment should be targeted at infrastructure and services that offer sustainable solutions to the underlying causes of health inequalities, such as community-based support, quality homes, and access to education and skills at all ages.

- Working in partnership: The Welsh Government should facilitate an enabling, responsive, and innovative operating environment that includes citizens, communities, public bodies, not-for-profit and third sector partners, and the private sector. Priorities should include giving people a greater voice in defining solutions and making partnerships fit for purpose.

A cross-Committee Senedd inquiry will enable all Committees to consider what action each Welsh Government department is doing to tackle the root causes of health inequalities.