

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 55

Ymateb gan: | Response from: [Cymdeithas Cwnsela a Seicotherapi Prydain](#) | [British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy](#)

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?

Your proposal to review access to mental health services is both critical and timely and should focus on informing the Government's upcoming review and refresh of *Together for Mental Health*, Welsh Government's 10 year cross-governmental strategy to improve mental health and well-being across all ages. The current strategy ends in 2022 and is due to be revised over the next 12 months. We believe this inquiry therefore needs to commence early in this parliament and should be a priority.

We would particularly welcome a focus on access to psychological therapies, including counselling and psychotherapy, which was a significant challenge before the pandemic. Many people across Wales are waiting too long to get the treatment they need, and there are serious discrepancies in waiting times and quality between local areas. Whilst there is a 26 week waiting time target for



psychological therapies following assessment, Health Inspectorate Wales found (in 2019) that people in some areas are waiting for up to two years to access psychological therapies. Extensive analysis has shown that patients who receive their therapy of choice have better outcomes, however, the majority of people accessing psychological therapies in Wales are not offered choice of treatment or a choice on when and where they receive it.

During the pandemic, the Welsh Government funded third sector organisations to provide additional mild to moderate mental health support services, your inquiry should review the impact of these new services and their role in improving access to psychological support.

The role of the mental health workforce is a critical element of the mental health response and should be a key feature of this inquiry, and also within the proposed inquiry into the Health and Social Care Workforce. We would welcome the opportunity to speak to the committee about the challenges being faced by counsellors and psychotherapists in Wales.

The pandemic has also highlighted clear mental health inequalities, with a disproportionate impact on particular groups in society, such as those on a low income; people with an existing mental health condition; children and young adults, and people from racialised communities. Supporting the mental health of these groups needs to be central to the design and delivery of all Mental health Services across Wales and should be a further focus of your inquiry, and we believe a session should be devoted to gathering evidence and insight from people of lived experience from each of these communities.

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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Adfer yn dilyn COVID

COVID recovery

We believe this should be a feature of all of the inquiries being taken forward by the Committee.