

**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 84**

**Ymateb gan: | Response from: Endometriosis UK**

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## Question 1: Initial priorities identified by the Committee

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.

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

You can comment on as many or few of the issues as you want.

In your answers, you might want to think about:

- What impact or outcomes could be achieved through any work by the Committee?
- How the Committee might address the issue?
- When any Committee work should take place?
- Whether there are any specific groups, communities or stakeholders that the Committee should involve or hear from in any work?

The Committee should address the following as priorities.

Public health and prevention including:

- Committee support for public health awareness campaigns and education which can speed up diagnosis ensuring that people recognise they have a medical problem and present to the NHS in a timely manner
- Committee support for GP education and training to speed up diagnosis, in particular of long term conditions consulting stakeholders such as the Royal College of GPs and other Health Professionals bodies

Better access to mental health services:

- Committee encouragement for Welsh Government to support and fund expanded access to mental health services
- Committee activity to promote importance of early intervention to improve mental health outcomes and reduce the likelihood of more serious mental ill health
- Committee to recognise the impact of Covid-19 on mental health
- Committee to consider learnings from the provision of digital mental health support during the pandemic – what can be adopted, what needs improving etc, recognising that digital mental health support does not suit everyone

Better access to health services for those with long term chronic conditions

- Committee to recognise the personal and societal cost of poorly managed long term chronic conditions

- Committee to encourage Welsh Government and Health Boards to develop holistic care pathways for long term chronic conditions
- Committee to encourage employers and educational establishments to develop appropriate support policies for workers and/or students with long term chronic conditions
- Committee to consider learning from digital health support for long term chronic conditions during the pandemic, recognising that digital health is not suitable for everyone

## Question 2: Key priorities for the Sixth Senedd

**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?**

You can comment on as many or few of the issues as you want.

In your answers, you might want to think about:

- What impact or outcomes could be achieved through any work by the Committee?
- How the Committee might address the issue?
- When any Committee work should take place?
- Whether there are any specific groups, communities or stakeholders that the Committee should involve or hear from in any work?

### **a) Health services**

Endometriosis UK believes that women's health should be a key priority for health services in Wales. This would align with what women in Wales said in response to the Welsh government's gender equality review, namely that health was a top priority.

The Scottish government published a [Women's Health Plan](#) in August 2021, and the Department of Health and Social Care in England undertook a [consultation on a future women's health strategy](#) in July 2021 and the strategy is currently being developed. Endometriosis UK would call on the Welsh government to undertake similar action.

Endometriosis UK is a member of a third sector coalition drawing up a Women and Girls' Health Quality Statement for Wales. The coalition is calling on the Committee to make women and girls health a priority for this Sixth Senedd including supporting the development and implementation of the aforementioned Quality Statement. The coalition has nearly 30 members which include health-focused, condition-specific, equality rights and patient advocacy organisations from across Wales and the UK, all of whom have come together with the aim of ensuring all aspects of women and girls' health are considered and prioritised appropriately. Endometriosis UK would ask the Committee to support this initiative and encourage the Welsh Government to adopt it.

In relation to menstrual health and wellbeing and endometriosis care in Wales, we would ask the Committee to support and promote activities contributing to:

- Recognising and measuring the scale of endometriosis in Wales and committing appropriate resources to diagnosing, treating and managing the condition
- Continuing the implementation of the recommendations of the excellent 2018 Welsh government review on endometriosis care in line with NICE guideline NG 73 on

endometriosis: diagnosis and care and NICE quality standard QS 172<sup>1</sup> both adopted by the Welsh Government.

- Increased funding for research into menstrual health conditions including endometriosis
- Addressing gaps in existing NICE guidance including:
  - care pathways for non-pelvic endometriosis
  - appropriate post surgery care
  - access to pain management in line with NICE chronic pain guideline<sup>2</sup>
  - integrating mental health support into care pathways

We would also ask the Committee to push the Welsh Government to commit to reducing average time to diagnosis from current 9 years to under 4 years by 2025 and under one year by 2030, achieving which will include:

- clear pathways for diagnosis
- investment in diagnostic capacity in gynaecology departments
- investment in training and skills to ensure each gynaecology department has doctors with expertise in endometriosis
- improving healthcare practitioner awareness and understanding of endometriosis
- improving public awareness and understanding of endometriosis including implementation of menstrual well-being education in all Welsh primary and secondary schools

## **b) Social care and carers**

## **c) COVID recovery**

An important aspect of COVID recovery is tackling the pandemic related gynaecology (including non-cancer) backlog in Wales. The committee can encourage the Welsh Government and Welsh Health Boards to ensure that tackling the backlog is done a fair manner based on clinical need, for example using the Royal College of Gynaecologists and Obstetricians (RCOG) Covid-19 prioritisation framework<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> [NICE guidance NG73 on Endometriosis: diagnosis and management](#), 6 September 2017 & [Quality Standards QS172 on Endometriosis](#), 6 August 2018

<sup>2</sup> [NICE Guideline NG 193: Chronic pain \(primary and secondary\) in over 16s: assessment of all chronic pain and management of chronic primary pain](#), published 7 April 2021,

<sup>3</sup> [Restoration and Recovery: Priorities for obstetrics and gynaecology – a prioritisation framework in response to Covid-19](#), Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, last updated 21 April 2021

Endometriosis UK has heard from those with endometriosis in Wales who had surgery cancelled or postponed due to the pandemic, who have been told they may wait several years for a new date. Some of those currently on the waiting list have severe endometriosis and would be prioritised under the aforementioned RCOG framework.

### **Question 3: Any other issues**

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