

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 85

**Ymateb gan: | Response from: Gwasanaethau Gwirfoddol Morgannwg |
Glamorgan Voluntary Services**





Empowering people. Inspiring excellence. Strengthening communities.

Response from Glamorgan Voluntary Services (GVS) to: Consultation on the Health and Social Care: Priorities for the Sixth Senedd

Introduction to Glamorgan Voluntary Services

GVS is an independent charity and has a flourishing membership of voluntary and community organisations active in the Vale of Glamorgan. We help to improve the quality of life of people and communities by supporting volunteers, volunteering opportunities and voluntary groups.

GVS delivers a range of quality services to meet the needs of voluntary groups. We are a one stop shop for the voluntary sector. We champion best practice throughout voluntary organisations so that they excel in delivering their aims and objectives.

GVS empowers voluntary groups, providing many channels of engagement and quality services to enable them to excel at serving their communities. Our role is to provide information, advice and guidance on all aspects of volunteering for both volunteers and recruiting organisations.

The Health and Social Care Facilitators in GVS support the third sector and statutory partners in a number of ways:

- Promoting partnership working within the sector and across sectors
- Promoting third sector organisations and services to statutory partners and vice versa
- Representing the third sector at strategic planning and partnership groups
- Engaging the sector in consultations and engagement about health and social services

GVS Response

GVS welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Health and Social Care: Priorities for the Sixth Senedd. We respond to this in our capacity as an organisation which supports the third sector in the Vale of Glamorgan. We are also active partners in many areas of work with the Health Board and with the local authorities.

Our response follows the format of the priorities rather than the survey.

Specific Comments on the Priorities

Public Health and Prevention

- This priority is important, however, this issue does not mention intervention which normally goes hand in hand with prevention.
- The issue of prevention appears to have disappeared largely from the agenda when it comes to planning and developing services. This is understandable as COVID-19 has put undue pressures on all sectors. However, it is important that prevention is returned to its rightful place as an important element of health, social care and wellbeing and its contribution to preventing crisis is fully recognised. For this reason, GVS suggests that the funding which is planned to replace ICF and Transformation funding has a stated intention of funding preventative services. In a recent WCVA briefing session, it was heartening to hear a member of Welsh Government staff outline how for them, the ICF funding of £2,000 to a choir for vulnerable people, was an excellent example of what can be done and of the impact of these kinds of services. GVS has successfully managed small grant funding schemes out of ICF for the last five years and this has helped to fund a very wide range of similar services, operated by many

varied third sector organisations. The value of these services is sometimes overlooked, but their reach and outcomes are impressive as is the quality of monitoring and evaluation. For this reason, given the comment made by the Welsh Government official, it would be good if the Committee's work and the new funding guidance could emphasise the value of these preventative, community based services.

Health and Social Care Workforce

- Staffing is an issue across all sectors; finding new staff and retaining old staff, as well as monitoring the mental health of staff who have been in post throughout the pandemic. Staff that have worked on the frontline have proven how vital they are to everyday life.
- For this priority GVS would like the Committee to ensure the work is focused widely so it includes third sector staff and is explicit in its intention to do so.

Access to Mental Health Services

- Access to Mental Health services is a priority due to demand and the unique pressures COVID-19 and lockdown have had on the populace. There is also a lot of anxiety about returning to normal, but there are many third sector schemes to help reintroduce people back to their communities. Many third sector community organisations have reported an increase in service users.
- Cardiff and Vale Action for Mental Health (CAVAMH) is an umbrella organisation working with voluntary sector groups with an interest in mental health, mental health service users and carers in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. CAVAMH produces directories of mental health services and Directions, which is a directory and handbook for older people with mental health lived experience and people living with dementia, including carers.
- Social prescribing services for people with mental health issues appear to be proving effective. However, provision of social prescribing services is not consistent across regions and across Wales. It would be good to see the Committee consider best practice in social prescribing (there is a lot of research available) and consider how all residents of Wales could benefit from social prescribing services and avoid the patchy nature of current services.
- Social Isolation can also affect mental health. But social isolation has worsened for those who cannot access digital services. There have been many schemes that have started during COVID-19 to help those who are not digitally inclined or possess the necessary equipment. But there are still people who will be missed and require support now. Digital services can be part of the mix in terms of accessing and utilising services, but they cannot always replace, and should not replace, face to face support.

Evidence Based Innovation in Health and Social Care

- There has been lots of research into best practice over the years and many different recent research projects into COVID-19 and its impact on services and sectors. Unfortunately, there can be a tendency for research reports to be viewed in isolation and not acted upon, rather than being used as a way of ensuring continuous development of best practice. It would be useful to consider ways we can more effectively share best practice and how ways in which third sector best practice can be promoted more widely (see also comment above about the choir funded by ICF).

Support and Services for Unpaid Carers

- Unpaid carers, both adults, young carers and young adult carers, have experienced huge challenges during the pandemic, in addition to the challenges they faced pre-COVID-19. Consultations held with carers over many years have indicated that they often feel undervalued and under supported. COVID-19 has increased this and resulted in many carers becoming more isolated and less able to access services which support them and the person they care for. It is well documented how much unpaid carers save the taxpayer in terms of the caring role they are willing to take on. Their support needs are also well documented and in every consultation that the GVS Facilitators have been involved in, in Cardiff and the Vale, the need for respite has been continuously highlighted, including emergency respite.
- Unfortunately, short term funded projects are often used to solve the identified challenges and there is little stability in the provision of services for unpaid carers, especially now. This particularly affects the third sector where short term funded projects come to an end, even when they have proved to be successful. The Cardiff and Vale Carers Gateway is an example of a highly effective, successful service, funded by ICF, and is reliant on short term funding.
- For information, Glamorgan Voluntary Services (GVS), in liaison with the Carers Trust SEW, facilitates the Cardiff and Vale Carers Support and Information Network Group (CSING) which brings together front line services for unpaid carers and provides a mechanism for sharing updates and highlighting issues and concerns.

Access to Covid and Non Covid Rehabilitation Services

- The third sector has been vital during COVID-19 and the lockdown for being able to quickly adapt to the situation as well as supporting those most in need in the communities. But there is a reliance on the third sector without support (e.g. funding). Often other sectors have started relying heavily on the third sector and there has been an increase in people needing help without the normal third sector fundraising options being available. Without support or funding the vital third sector organisations, groups, volunteers and their services will cease, causing backlogs of people who need to find somewhere else and start the process again.
- The issues do not mention waiting lists and as the backlog from COVID-19 is growing larger every day this should be a priority for the Committee.

Access to Services for Long Term Chronic Conditions

- Deaf and blind people have struggled during the lockdown as PPE requirements have caused issues. For example, being unable to lip read with masks and unable to see one way systems; this will have increased isolation and affected mental health.
- GVS is aware that there are not always enough services to support younger adults who have a long term condition. They are not able to access older people's services due to the age criteria, but would benefit from services which would help them link to community services, for example volunteer transport schemes which could help them attend social activities. This is especially important now as many people with long term conditions will have been shielding and may have lost confidence in being out in the community. It would be good if

the Committee could consider how people who have long term conditions can be supported to overcome the issues they have faced during COVID-19.

General Comments

- The priorities should not forget care homes that have struggled throughout the last year. It is important that the staff of care homes are supported. It is also important that the residents are helped to socialise outside of the care home so that they can become a part of their community again.
- The Committee meeting should be quarterly, as COVID-19 has shown the picture can rapidly change.
- The enquiry asks for specific groups, communities or stakeholders that the Committee should hear about. Third Sector has a range of vital services that have supported the public throughout the pandemic. It would be an incomplete picture to only name a few. Please see the online directories that GVS has compiled for more information on local services: [Service Directories — GVS](#)

Summary

GVS hopes that this response is helpful.

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