

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 107

Ymateb gan: | [Response from Diverse Cymru](#)

Priorities for the Sixth Senedd: Health and Social Care Committee

Submission from Diverse Cymru

Respondent's name:

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We would like to be added to the Health and Social Care Committee's contacts list in order to receive updates about your work.

We are writing to provide evidence on the forthcoming strategic priorities for the Health and Social Care Committee and in particular how the focus of the committee relates to, and can build on commitments to a fair and equal Wales for all.

Diverse Cymru promotes equality for all. We work across all protected characteristics and with other people who experience discrimination and disadvantage, such as carers and people from lower socio-economic backgrounds. We believe that we can work together to challenge discrimination in all its forms and create an equitable future for the people of Wales.

We believe that equality and human rights should be at the heart of every decision the Senedd makes affecting Wales. Equality, diversity and inclusion must be a cross-cutting theme, central to all inquiries and work of every Senedd committee and policy area.

We would welcome any opportunity to work with you to build commitments to a fair and equal Wales for all into your policies and work as the Health and Social Care Committee.

A copy of our Manifesto for 2021 is available, in both English and Welsh, here: <https://www.diversecymru.org.uk/a-manifesto-for-a-fair-and-equal-wales-2/>

1. The initial priorities for the Sixth Senedd identified by the Committee

Mental Health and Wellbeing is pivotal to create a fair and equal Wales, therefore access to appropriate mental health services should be a key focus. This includes suitable mental health support for health and social care staff as we recover from the pandemic. We believe that health, wellbeing, and social care services must ensure support and treatment are integrated, holistic, and tailored for diverse communities across Wales. Mental health must be seen as an equal priority to physical health, including public health messages, quick and early access to support, tackling stigma, and providing tailored services to meet the needs of different protected characteristics.

A comprehensive and multi-sectorial approach to mental health promotion, prevention, treatment, care and recovery is vital. This approach must be culturally sensitive and competent. It must take full account of all the diversity and equality factors each individual experiences. Support for carers should be improved, including training, mental health support, respite and a specific bereavement service for carers. Integrating reviews of access, inclusion, and appropriate services for people with one or more protected characteristics and others who experience inequality and disadvantage in Wales should form an integral part of the committee's work on mental health and wellbeing.

Support for carers should be improved, including training, mental health support, respite and a specific bereavement service for carers. We feel that identifying and addressing issues faced by unpaid carers, including carers who experience inequality and disadvantage and interactions with equality and diversity, is important to integrate into the committee's inquiries and priorities.

In terms of the health and social care workforce any work on this issue should include barriers and progress in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion. This should include initial training and comprehensive equality, diversity and inclusion training including all groups and sub-groups specifically; recruitment, retention, support, and progression of a representative workforce across all protected groups and others who experience discrimination and disadvantage; and reforming workplace policies and practices to support and include all staff, including flexible and agile working.

Throughout all the priorities identified the committee should identify and address any differential impacts or experiences for people with one or more protected characteristics and others who experience discrimination or disadvantage in Wales.

2. What other key priorities the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd in relation to: health services, social care and carers, and COVID recovery.

a. health services

Investment in advocacy, including specialist advocacy services, is needed to ensure that barriers to accessing services and receiving equal outcomes are addressed. Appropriate support and advocacy for people in Wales, including various diverse communities and groups, should be part of the committee's work.

Women, LGBTQIA+ people, Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic people, and disabled people (all impairment groups) have different and often negative experiences of both healthcare and social care. These groups and people of different religions and beliefs often do not receive services or support that meets their requirements and is tailored to their needs, wishes and outcomes. Investing health inequalities and improvements needed to health and social care to adapt to different communities and individuals should be a key thread running throughout the committee's work.

Additionally we support FTWW's call for a focus on women's health, which must also recognise and address intersectional concerns and experiences of women who experience discrimination and disadvantage due to other characteristics, including older women, younger women, disabled women, LBT+ women, women of different religions and beliefs, and women from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

b. social care and carers

Delays to receiving appropriate care and support when transitioning from healthcare to social care must be addressed. The funding must follow the individual and meet their individual requirements, to avoid any delays to receiving social care.

We believe that health and social care must provide an integrated, seamless service, which actively recognises and accounts for each individual's views, wishes, and circumstances. Social care must be seen as just as valuable to society as health care. We feel that these issues should form part of the committee's work.

c. COVID recovery

As we recover from Covid-19 it is vital that equality and human rights is placed front and centre of all legislation, strategies, policies, programmes, and actions. The impact on all different communities and groups in Wales must be monitored and action taken to ensure that we emerge from this crisis stronger and more equal, rather than equality and human rights being detrimentally affected. Older, younger, disabled, and Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic people and women are already disproportionately impacted by higher unemployment and lower wages. The current crisis has deepened and highlighted these inequalities.

A 'one size fits all' approach will not meet the equalities requirements of people with one or more protected characteristics. We need to recognise and act on the voices and experiences of people in Wales, including intersectional issues. Failure to make this fundamental shift in the way we address equality and diversity will leave many people in Wales at risk of discrimination, poverty and injustice.

Legislation, policy and practice must be co-produced with individuals representing the diversity of the Wales across all characteristics to ensure that it respects every individual and advances equality for all. There is significant evidence that legislative compliance is not reflected in people's experiences of barriers to accessing services and in discrimination in Wales. This implementation gap must be closed. Effective monitoring and ensuring that the public are directly involved in continually evaluating the effectiveness of steps taken to advance equality and human rights are vital.