

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 133

Ymateb gan: | Response from: [Anabledd Cymru](#) | [Disability Wales](#)

Priorities for the Health and Social Care Committee – Disability Wales
Response

For further information please contact xxxx, Policy and Research Officer

Who are Disability Wales?

Disability Wales/Anabledd Cymru is the national association of disabled peoples organisations in Wales striving to achieve the rights and equality of all disabled people.

Disability Wales promotes the adoption and implementation of the Social Model of Disability, which identifies that it is environmental, organisational, and attitudinal barriers that disable people and prevent their full participation in society not their medical conditions or impairments.

Introduction

This response is informed by our manifesto “Bring Us Our Rights: Disabled People’s Manifesto”. This manifesto was informed by around 230 contributions from disabled people across Wales, gathered via 9 focus groups, a survey and multiple semi-structured interviews.

We thank the Health and Social Care committee for the opportunity to comment on their future priorities. We look forward to working together to create a more equal Wales.

Key Recommendations

- Improving advocacy services in Wales and the provision of independent advocates in the health service
- Disability Equality Training, developed in co-production with disabled people and disabled people’s organisations, for all staff. This training should also include communication with non-verbal disabled people, cultural competency, disabled ethnic minorities, disabled women and disabled LGBTQ+ people.

- Ensuring that all people, regardless of impairment, ethnicity, English language level or wealth, have a full say in their healthcare and promotion of the importance of medical consent.
- Use the Social Model of Disability as a base framework for all policy.
- Prioritise independent living
- Use the UNCRDP as a framework for analysing policy and holding the Welsh Government to account.
- Work towards a flexible system that works to support disabled people to get the specific support that they need, how they need it.
- Ensuring that social care is free at the point of need
- Working cross-committee to ensure that the right to independent living is supported in social care, but that this also carries over to areas such as housing, infrastructure and transport.

Justice in Healthcare

During our manifesto research, we were told that it is difficult for disabled people to access justice within the health care system. It is a right for all people that their wishes are fully respected within the health system, but unfortunately medical model attitudes which infantilise and ignore the autonomy of disabled people are still prevalent. This is particularly the case for disabled people who have a learning impairment and face extreme difficulty in accessing proper healthcare due to negative attitudes of staff and lack of access to accessible information.

We have been told that this is also a major issue for black and ethnic minority disabled people, especially if neither English or Welsh is their first language. They have told us about stereotypes that they experience and that there is not enough training or awareness about their situations or support available to them in a language or format that they can understand.

We have also heard that disabled women face poor services and long waits for a diagnosis. We have been told that gynaecological health services are not up to standard and require overhaul in Wales.

Unfortunately, Wales does not have a specific plan for women's health, Disability Wales looks forward to hearing from the work done by Fair Treatment for Women in Wales on this.

Key priorities:

- Improving advocacy services in Wales and the provision of independent advocates in the health service
- Disability Equality Training, developed in co-production with disabled people and disabled people's organisations, for all staff. This training should also include communication with non-verbal disabled people, cultural competency, disabled ethnic minorities, disabled women and disabled LGBTQ+ people.
- Ensuring that all people, regardless of impairment, ethnicity, English language level or wealth, have a full say in their healthcare and promotion of the importance of medical consent.

The Social Model of Disability

For many years the Welsh Government have maintained their commitment to the Social Model of Disability. Developed by disabled people themselves, this is a model of disability which emphasizes the difference between "disability" and "impairment", where a person with an impairment, a long-term or permanent health condition that impacts day-to-day life, becomes disabled due to barriers set up in society.

This is the preferred model for many disabled people as it more accurately reflects their experiences and is a better model to work from for them than some of the other models, e.g. the medical model and the charity model, which were developed by non-disabled people and do not accurately reflect these experiences.

Unfortunately, despite previous commitments and some progress being made, we saw a return to the medical model of disability during the pandemic. Describing disabled adults as "vulnerable", focusing on a person's impairment instead of the barriers causing the issues. We also saw this in policy, such as schedule 8 of the Coronavirus Act, reducing the amount of scrutiny before a person can be put into a facility.

Although this power was never enacted, this is a very serious issue for disabled people, especially those with a mental health impairment. These facilities can be extremely traumatic for disabled people, and we are very concerned that this ableist policy would be put into law in the first place and are very glad that no disabled person had to deal with the consequences.

Key Priorities:

- Use the social model of disability as a base framework for all policy.

- Prioritise independent living
- Use the UNCRDP as a framework for analysing policy and holding the Welsh Government to account.

Social Care for All

The Welsh social care system is designed to be one that provides adequate social care services for all. We have seen commitments to this and to a system led by the social model of disability and the principle of independent living.

Unfortunately, this is not reflected in the experiences that disabled people have reported to us from the ground. Many people have experienced a service which has been extremely inaccessible to them, with views grounded in the medical model and find it difficult to impossible to access the appropriate services for them. For example, some people have reported to us that they preferred being able to hire their own personal assistant through direct payments, but were faced with a choice between properly funded agency care or poorly funded direct payments and therefore could not get the right support for their needs.

Key Priorities:

- Work towards a flexible system that works to support disabled people to get the specific support that they need, how they need it.
- Ensuring that social care is free at the point of need
- Working cross-committee to ensure that the right to independent living is supported in social care, but that this also carries over to areas such as housing, infrastructure and transport.

Conclusion

Despite the work being done to rectify, there are still major problems within health and social care in Wales. The system is still difficult to navigate, of varying quality across Wales and disabled people often cannot access the right support for them. All these exacerbated if you face additional barriers, such as being a disabled woman.

These priorities constitute a useful lens for the committee to use in their future work on this. With these priorities, alongside the incorporation of the UNCRDP, we can work together to ensure a more equal Wales for all.