

HSC PSS 29

Ymateb gan: | Response from: Adferiad Recovery



Welsh Parliament Health and Social Care Committee consultation on its Priorities for the Sixth Senedd

Response from Adferiad Recovery

1. About us

1.1 Adferiad Recovery is a newly-formed Welsh charity, the result of a merger between Adferiad Recovery, Hafal, CAIS and WCADA on April 1st 2021. Adferiad Recovery is a charity and company limited by guarantee which speaks for people with a serious mental illness (including schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and other conditions involving psychosis or loss of insight), people affected by addiction, and people with co-occurring diagnoses, and for their families and carers, as well as for a wider group of vulnerable people for whom we provide services.

1.2 Adferiad Recovery is governed by its members who elect our Board of Trustees (which has strong representation of service users and carers). Adferiad Recovery delivers services in all twenty-two counties of Wales and in Lancashire.

2. Adferiad Recovery response to the consultation

2.1 Adferiad Recovery broadly welcomes the initial priorities for the Sixth Senedd identified by the Committee, and particularly the priorities which focus on access to mental health services and support and services for unpaid carers as these are areas of particular concern for our members.

2.2 However, there are further key priorities that we feel the Committee should adopt during the Sixth Senedd.

2.3 First, there should be a priority for **access to services for those with addiction issues**, particularly given the recent rise in numbers of people with gambling, alcohol and other addictions.

A 2017 HIW/CIW Review of Substance Misuse Services in Wales found that access and waiting times for services across Wales is inconsistent and is sometimes limited in rural areas, and that long waiting times and a lack of capacity in services means that some find it difficult to get the treatment they need.

Following a period when even more people have struggled with addiction, access to appropriate support should be high on the Committee's agenda.

2.4 Second, there needs to be a priority to **integrate services and provide a holistic service** for the many patients in Wales with mental illness, addiction issues or co-occurring/complex needs.

Often, people with a mental illness receive little treatment for their substance misuse issues, and people with an addiction have in the past been excluded from mental health care. However, such needs typically interact with and exacerbate one another, leading to individuals experiencing several problems simultaneously.

Taking a comprehensive and integrated approach to providing care is the best way to build a new life in recovery from mental illness, addiction and co-occurring disorders. We need a new approach where the NHS and councils move away from commissioning services in silos. Instead of using conditions to exclude people from services we need to commission dynamic services which meet the complex needs of the citizens of Wales.

The Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010 identified that a holistic approach is essential: considering accommodation, social life, physical health, money etc. as well as mental health needs if we are to make any difference to those who need help. The Sixth Senedd is the time to ensure that this approach is not only being implemented properly for secondary mental health patients but also those with addiction and co-occurring issues.

Services need to be joined-up and structured to deliver an individualised approach rather than trying to fit the person to the service. Only then will they truly reflect the people they serve, and only then will they truly be effective.

2.5 Third, there needs to be a priority to **tackle the stigma around addiction as well as mental illness**.

In recent years the Welsh Government has been successful in tackling the stigma surrounding mental illness, partly through funding the successful Time to Change Wales anti-stigma campaign run by Adferiad Recovery and Mind Cymru.

Today people are more comfortable speaking about mental health issues than they were decades ago. The same cannot be said about addiction, and certainly about those with co-occurring issues who experience both addiction and mental illness.

One of the priorities for the next five years must be to address this stigma because if there is shame around any of these issues, people will continue to hide their problems and avoid accessing the vital help they need.

2.6 Finally, there needs to be cross-cutting priority to **adopt a Prudent Healthcare approach** in the provision of all care and treatment.

We know that following the pandemic there are likely to be more people in Wales needing support for wellbeing, mental health and/or addiction issues. Of course, anyone in need of help should always receive a positive referral to an appropriate source of support, but it is also vitally important that specialist services define their role clearly and avoid medicalising normal reactions to life events.

We welcome the Welsh Government's priority for a "No Wrong Door" approach which could, if properly implemented, help avoid children and families being passed around by different agencies. But this approach needs to work alongside the principle of Prudent Healthcare, pioneered by the present First Minister when he was health minister, which seeks to ensure that people are not supported at higher levels of intervention than they need.

If the access routes to services work robustly so that specialist services are allowed to focus on the patients which need them while other support services consistently assist those with problems which are better addressed at that level then this will have the greatest impact in terms of improving people's lives.

3. Contact

For more information on the above points please contact:

Head of Communications

Adferiad Recovery
Unit B3, Lakeside Technology Park
Phoenix Way, Llansamlet
Swansea SA7 9FE