

CYPE(6)-04-22 - Paper to note 13

Lynne Neagle AS/MS

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Iechyd Meddwl a Llesiant
Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing

Ein cyf/Our ref MA/LN/0081/22



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Jayne Bryant MS
Chair, Children, Young People and Education
Committee Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
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18 January 2022

Dear Jayne,

Thank you for your letter of 17 December confirming that perinatal mental health will remain a priority for the Children, Young People and Education Committee during this term and requesting an update on progress. I welcome the Committee's emphasis on this area which is also a key priority for me as Deputy Minister for Mental Health & Wellbeing.

The then Minister for Mental Health, Wellbeing and Welsh Language wrote to the Committee in March 2021, providing a comprehensive update on progress against all the recommendations in response to the previous Committee's report on Perinatal Mental Health in Wales, published in October 2017. As that update demonstrated this is an area where significant progress has been made following the Committee's report on Perinatal Mental Health in Wales, published in October 2017. Previous Ministers have provided the Committee with updates against the recommendations made in response to that report, and I will be pleased to continue to do so. However, as a result of the current Omicron Covid-19 impact on the NHS it is not possible to provide the usual level of detail in this latest update because it is essential that the perinatal clinical workforce can prioritise the provision of high quality services to mothers and families, whilst managing the challenges presented by the Omicron variant. In order to maximise front line clinical capacity, officials are not currently engaging members of the perinatal mental health network on information gathering as many are deployed to clinical service priorities. I will however provide a more detailed update to Committee as soon as possible. Similarly, the data exercise conducted at the end of last year has not been concluded due to pressures on services. I will provide a full update on perinatal service data in due course.

There are, however, a number of areas where I am able to provide an update to Committee. The Mother and Baby Unit within Swansea Bay University Health Board has been open since April 2021, providing care to mothers in need of specialist support. Officials receive regular

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

updates on the usage of the unit which have been positive. As I have previously stated that there will be a full review of the unit once it has been operational for 12 months. This review will determine whether the care being provided is meeting current and projected demand, and to establish the long term plan for specialist care in South Wales. As the updates provided to Welsh Government on the operation of the unit have already confirmed there is sufficient demand in South Wales, the review will not consider whether there is a need for a unit, but will focus on whether the size of the unit and the services offered remain fit for purpose in the future.

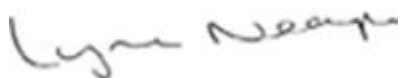
Work is ongoing to establish specialist provision for women living in North Wales. Welsh Health Specialist Services Committee (WHSSC) is leading the commissioning of this inpatient provision. WHSSC is engaged with NHS England to develop a joint, eight bedded Mother and Baby Unit for women living in North Wales. We understand the refurbishment work of this unit will take 18 months to complete. I will provide further updates on progress in future correspondence.

Health boards are working towards meeting the relevant Royal College of Psychiatrists' quality standards. On 27 October 2021 I confirmed that three health boards were reporting funded staffing positions which would enable full compliance with Type 1 staffing standards. We continue to work with those health boards who are not yet fully compliant and this will be a key priority area for Service Improvement Funding this year. However, I do recognise the significant impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on services, particularly the ability to recruit to specialist posts. In future updates I will confirm progress in recruiting staff to all funded positions, and progress in all health boards on meeting staffing standards.

All health boards in Wales are now signed up to the perinatal quality network, and have undertaken a review on progress towards meeting the wider standards. Health Boards are developing action plans where needs for improvement have been identified.

Work is continuing to improve the reliability of data collected on perinatal mental health services. The Perinatal Mental Health Network has agreed a number of key data items to be collected on an ongoing basis. This was presented to the Mental Health Outcomes and Measures Board in November 2021, and work is ongoing to ensure that perinatal data collection will align with wider mental health data collection. In the meantime officials have continued to request regular updates from services on key data items. As not all health boards have been able to respond to the latest data request due to workforce pressures at this time, I will provide a summary of this data in my next update.

I would like to thank the Committee for its continued focus on perinatal mental health.



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